

**MAKING A HOME:
SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DOMESTIC SPACE AMONG THE
CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX ANTIOCHEANS IN ISTANBUL**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: Christian Orthodox Antiocheans, home-making, spatial negotiations, affect, trauma, ruination, beautification, non-status minority, muzealization.

This research examines instances of everyday life experience, and the process of home-making of a group of Antiochean migrants in the city of Istanbul, Turkey. It focuses on processes of spatial negotiation and transformation, through practices of consumption and production involved in the home-making experience. Furthermore, it explores the element of 'affect' within the context of the political economy and materiality of home-making.

The families studied, have been living in houses that belong to the Greek Minority of Istanbul, allocated to them, under the obligation to tend for the adjoined buildings, mainly churches, schools and cemeteries. Inhabiting these conditionally private spaces is therefore interwoven with taking care of a communal/public space. These residences constitute a network of households that link migrant Antiocheans in Istanbul, embedding them at the same time as nodes in an expanding, global matrix, including south-east Turkey, Istanbul, Athens, Berlin.

However the historicity of these spaces turns them in much more than simply residence, they are defined by power-relations, inclusion opportunities, spatial hierarchies and encounters, and constitute for the Antiocheans both living and working places.

This structure creates a canvas where simultaneous, multilayer, processes and performances play out. All of these are invested with symbolic and material meaning that constantly renegotiates the boundaries of self and other and along the way redefines both.

ÖZET

BİR EV YAPMAK: İSTANBUL'DAKİ HRİSTİYAN ORTODOKS ANTAKYALILAR'DA EV-İÇİ ALANIN SEMBOLİK TEMSİLLERİ

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Hristiyan Ortodoks Antakyalılar, ev-yapımı, mekansal müzakere, duygulanım, travma, viranlaştırma, güzelleştirme, statüsüz azınlık, müzeleştirme

Bu çalışma Türkiye, İstanbul'daki bir grup Antakyalı göçmenin ev-yapım sürecindeki gündelik hayat deneyimlerini incelemektedir. Çalışma kapsamında ev-yapım deneyimini içeren, tüketim ve üretim pratikleri doğrultusunda mekansal uzlaşma ve dönüşüm süreçlerine odaklanılacaktır. Buna ek olarak, ev-yapımının politik-ekonomisi ve olgusallığı bağlamında “duygulanım” unsuru incelenecektir.

Çalıştığım aileler, çoğunlukla kilise, okul ve mezarlık alanı olan Rum azınlık mülklerinde yaşamaları koşuluyla kendilerine tahsis edilen evlerde hayatlarını sürdürüyorlar. Bu şartlı özel alanlarda ikamet etmek, kolektif/kamusal bir alana sahip çıkmakla iç içe geçmiştir. Bu meskenler, İstanbul'daki Antakyalı göçmenleri bir aile ağında buluştururken, bir yandan da Türkiye'nin güney doğusu, İstanbul, Atina ve Berlin'i birbirine bağlayan geniş bir küresel ağın da düğüm noktasını oluşturmaktadır.

Ne var ki, bu mekanların tarihselliği, onları basit meskenler olmaktan çıkartmaktadır. Güç ilişkileri, içerme olanakları, mekansal hiyerarşiler ve karşılaşmalar ile tanımlanan bu mekanlar aynı zamanda Antakyalılar'ın yaşam ve çalışma alanlarıdır. Bu ilişki zemini, öyle görülüyor ki, üzerinde çok katmanlı ve eş zamanlı süreçlerin ve performansların aktif olduğu bir alandır. Bütün bunlar hem kendi ve ötekinin sınırlarını yeniden müzakere eden, hem de karşılıklı olarak birbirini yeniden tanımlayan sembolik ve maddi anlamlarla donatılmıştır.

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Στους Δον Κιχώτες

Θωμά και Κώστα Μάντζο

“χρώμα δεν αλλάζουνε τα μάτια, μόνο τρόπο να κοιτάνε”

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research intends to shed light into instances of everyday life experience in the process of home-making of a group of Antiochean migrants in the city of Istanbul in Turkey. I will focus on processes of spatial negotiation and transformation, through the practices of consumption and production that the home-making experience involves. Furthermore, I will explore the element of 'affect' within the context of the 'political economy' and materiality of home-making. The latter two come with their own limitations in our understanding of what shapes and defines everyday life.

The families I have studied, after migrating to Istanbul, live in houses which belong to the Greek Minority of Istanbul, allocated to them, with the obligation to tend for the adjoined buildings, mainly churches, schools and cemeteries. Thus, this state of residing is not purely about residence; these spaces are defined by power-relations, spatial hierarchies and encounters, while they are, at the same time, living and working place, for the Antiocheans.

This is an interwoven inhabitation of a conditionally private space and a communal/public space under private care. The space is conditionally private because it belongs to the Greek Minority group, but under certain conditions it is open to the public, either for spiritual and social functions or open to visitors mainly tourists. At the same time individuals like the Antiocheans and their family members take care of these spaces, in a same way that they take care of their houses.

However, most importantly these spaces are shaped, in a longer period, of time, by absences, ruination, dispossession, nostalgia and traumatic experiences, as a result of the politics of the Turkish State.

The structure of the above setting thus creates a canvas where simultaneous, multilayer, processes and performances play out. All of these are invested with meaning, symbolic and material, that constantly renegotiates the boundaries of self and other and along the way redefines both. So specifically I intend to bring forward the ways in which the material world of the household, the intimate relations of the private sphere and the relations of (re)production in the public sphere, traumatic experiences of the past and their reconstruction in the present projections and imagination about future as well as prejudices, are in a constant negotiation.

1.2 Historical background

In order to understand the political and historical processes that have shaped the fortune and development of both, the Greek Minority in Istanbul and the Antiochean group, I provide in this section a condensed background. It begins with the early years of the Ottoman Empire all the way to present times, trying to highlight definitive turns and shifts around the perceptions and contextualization of minorities with a special focus on the incidents and political decisions that effected the christian populations part of which are the two groups. What we can observe through this historical travelogue is the central role of Turkish nation-state building processes entailed around the future of these people.

The Ottoman Turks appear in Asia Minor, at the eastern borders of the Byzantine state on the 13th century gradually conquering all the lands from Istanbul to Vienna. The conqueror Sultan Mehmet II, in the scope of his policy recognized many rights to the Rum (Greek Orthodox Christians) and granted the title of Millet başı -national leader- with administrative, judicial, and financial authorities to the Patriarche Georgio Gennadio (Scholario). Nevertheless, the Rum were subjugated and their belief was regarded as the religion of the Gavur -the infidel.

At the beginning of the 19th century many subjugated peoples influenced by the French revolution (1789) began to form national consciousness and to demand their independence from the Ottomans. Among those are the Greeks who revolted in 1821 and with the intervention of the Great Powers of that period created the first independent state (1830). In 1939, the period of Tanzimat (reforms) begins with the minorities gradually gaining greater freedom while the decline of the Empire encourages the subjected peoples to fight for their independence. At the turn of the 20th century the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)¹ ended with the Balkan peoples becoming sovereign and the creation of a strong Turkish nationalistic movement which struggled to create a national state for the Turks². For the same reason, the Turks participated on the side of the Germans in World War I (1914-1918). But although they were on the losing side at the end of the war, they refused to apply to the decisions made by the winners and went to the Peace Conference of Lausanne as winners because they had won the Greek army in Asia Minor (1919-1922). The Lausanne Peace Treaty (July 24th, 1923) confirmed the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of Turkey as an independent state. Among the issues of Greek –Turkish interests which were to be settled was the Agreement of the Exchange of the Greek-Turkish populations (Jan. 30th, 1923)³. with the exception of the compulsory exchange of the Greek Orthodox Christians of Istanbul and of the islands of Imbros and Tenedos (Turkey)⁴ and the Muslims of the West Thrace (Greece), about 120.000 from each minority which were characterized as *établis* (settlers).⁵ An incon-

1

Scopetea E., “Valkanikes Ethikes Syneidiseis stis Paramones ton Valkanikon Polemon”, *I Ellada ton Valkanikon Polemon, 1910-1914*, (The Balkan National Consciousness before the Balkan Wars- Greece During the Balkan Wars) Athina, ELIA, 1993.

2 Paul Dumont, *Kemal: O Dimiourgos tis Neas Tourkias (The Creator of Modern Turkey)*, Athina, 1998.

3 Arı, Kemal, *Büyük Mübadele Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç* (The Great Exchange Compulsory Emigration to Turkey) (1923-1925), 2.bsk., İstanbul, 2000.

4 Alexandris, Alexis, «Imbros and Tenedos : A Study of Turkish Attitudes toward two Ethnic Greek Island Communities since 1923», *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 7/1 (1980) 5-31.

5 Gioltzoglou St., *I Ellinoturkikes Sheseis* (The Greek-Turkish Relations) 1922-1930, Stamulis, Thessaloniki, 2011, 301-322.

sistent fact in the process of the exchange was that the two adversary national states mutually exchanged their citizens only on the base of religion. ⁶The Orthodox Christians of Antioch are not mentioned in any of the clauses of the treaty, because that area belonged to Syria then and was annexed to Turkey in 1938.

Since then the minorities of both sides on the base of the foreseen by the above treaty “mutuality” suffered discrimination a number of times violating its protective clauses. Turkey however, following a severe program of homogenizing its population gradually forced its Greek Orthodox Christian citizens out of their country, to such an extent that the number of them today to be not more than 2.000. The events which led to that state are the following:

1) During the 30’s, the Turks committed administrative, educational and financial violations: they revoked the foreseen type of self- government of the islands Imbros and Tenedos, undermined the minority education, closed schools, sacked teachers, financially charged the minority schools with payments to Turkish teachers, ⁷ deprived those who were not Muslims from practising their profession and from commercial activities forcing them to leave the country, confiscated properties considering them as abandoned, just because their owners were absent for a particular time.

2) In the 40’s, although Turkey did not participate in World War II, it mobilized a great number of Greek Orthodox Christians who were sent to forced labour in Anatolia, imposed destructive taxation on their possessions, causing their financial and in some cases their natural extermination.⁸

3) At the beginning of the 50’s the Greek –Turkish Friendship seemed to be on a solid base (entrance of both Turkey and Greece in NATO, 1952), however, the Cyprus issue aggravated the bilateral clashes. The Turkish nationalistic organizations and the Mass Media (with *Hürriyet* being the vanguard) cultivated an anti-Greek climate to the

6 Alexandris Al., *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*, Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Athens 1992. Oran, Baskın, *Türk Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu* (The Question of West Thrace in the Greek-Turkish Relations), İstanbul 1991.

7 Kaya N., *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Azınlık Okulları ve Temel sorunlar*, (Minority Schools in Turkey from Past to Present: Problems Experienced and Proposal Solutions), Tarih Vakfı, 2013, 10-24.

8 Cahit Kayra, *Savaş Türkiye Varlık Vergisi* (War Turkey Property Tax), Tarihçi Kitabevi, 3.bsk, İstanbul 2011.

public opinion with the aim to divert their attention from the serious financial and social problems. The provocations against the Patriarch Athinagoras (the *Tercüman* newspaper), the breakdown of the discussions on the Cyprus issue in London and the premeditated bomb explosion at Atatürk's house in Thessaloniki (the *İstanbul Ekspres* newspaper) sparked the outburst of the organized "outrage of the citizens" against a hundred thousand Greeks of Istanbul during the night of 6/7 Sept.1955. According to the official report, there were 16 deaths, 32 injuries, 200 rapes, damages in 4.500 companies, in 1004 houses, in 80 churches, in 30 schools and desecration of cemeteries. The government of Adnan Menderes attributed "the events of September" to the communists. There was no strong reaction from Greece because the Greek government was in a state of disruption and of the intervention of the U.S.A. The traumas however which were left to all the Greeks, not only in Istanbul, remained for the years that followed as the anti-Greek campaign in Istanbul continued with more specific targets, this time the Greeks with Greek citizenship.⁹

4) Between 1956-1958 the Turkish government was engaged in arresting, imprisonment, deportation, confiscation of properties, abolition of unions, boycott their business, put the use of the Greek language under control leading the people to realize more and more that they could no longer keep their basic cultural features (customs, traditions, language and way of life). A short period of improvement in the bilateral relations did follow resulting to the Treaties of Zurich and London (1959) regarding the independence of Cyprus. The military Coup of 1960 abolished the small steps taken to the rapprochement, condemned Menderes and the minister of Foreign Affairs Zorlu as the instigators of the "September events"(Jan.1961) Süleyman Coşkun, *Türkiye'de Politika* (1920-1995), Cem yayınevi, İstanbul, 1995, p.315 and gradually increased the anti-Greek climate and the pressures against the Greek minority. In March 1964, the Turkish government denounced the Greek-Turkish contract of settlement of 1930 signed by Venizelos and Atatürk, unilaterally, forcing 13.000 native Greek Orthodox Christians with Greek citizenship out of the country regardless of been protected by the Laussane

⁹ Güven D., 6-7 Eylül Olaylarına Bugünkü Türk ve Yunan Topluluklarının Bakış Açıları (The Present View of the September Events 6-7 of the Turks and Greeks), *İstanbul Rumları Bugün ve Yarın* (The Greek Orthodox Christians of Istanbul The Present and the Future), İstos, İstanbul, 2012, 159-164

Treaty. Later their families who had Turkish citizenship left as well rising the number to 30.000.¹⁰ Between 1964-1967 a coordinated program with prohibitive measures made living conditions for the Greeks of Istanbul unbearable . They were 80.000 in 1955 and ten years later the number had decreased to 48.000.

5)And while Turkey continued its anti-Greek practices, the Greek dictatorship of 1967 strives to improve their relations by signing a cultural agreement (1968) which secured advantages to Turks who closed the Theology School of Chalki(1971) and imposed the pledge “I am a Turk” and “I am happy to be born a Turk” to the minority schools. The obliteration of the Greeks in Istanbul was completed with the invasion of North Cyprus (1974) and the crisis in the Aegean (1975-1976). In 1978 there were only 7.880 Greek Orthodox Christians, now are around 2.000 with the majority being over sixty years old.

In the 70’s the emigration of the Antiocheans to Istanbul which had already been desolated of her native Rum begins. They are the only Orthodox Christians who being under the French sovereignty were not exchanged in 1923. And although the majority of the people, Christians and Muslims alike were Arabic speaking, in 1938 the place was given to Turkey. Therefore they constitute the only Christian Orthodox community in Turkey which officially has not been characterized as a minority and perhaps that fact might have protected them from the desportation and the pressures which the Greek Orthodox Christians of Istanbul have suffered.

The arrival of the Antiocheans to Istanbul has assisted the Rum community and gave the term “Greek-Orthodox” a specific cultural meaning far beyond the restrictive one of “nation” and “race” forming the ecumenical content which characterizes the Orthodox Christians as those with Greek education.

Most of the Antiocheans emigrated to Istanbul for financial, safety and educational reasons- due to the political acrimony during the mid -80’s in South-Eastern Turkey. They are about 8.000, mostly young with large families, a large number of which has been entegrated into the Rum communities offering their services to churches,

10 Akar R., Dış Politikanın Rehineleri: Rumların 1964’te Sürgün Edilmesi (The Hostages of Foreign Affairs: The Exile of the Greek Orthodox Christians), *İstanbul Rumları Bugün ve Yarın* (The Greek Orthodox Christians of Istanbul The Present and the Future), İstos, İstanbul, 2012,164-174.

schools and sending their children to the Greek minority schools where according to the Laussane Treaty are taught the Greek language and culture but seldom participate in the public and private life of the Greek speaking Orthodox Christians. A number of them avoid it either because of the cool welcoming by the Greek Orthodox Christians in Istanbul or due to their financial situation prefer to keep the distance and not develop relations with the local Rum community. It is a pervasive belief among the Antiocheans that are being “used” for the conservation of the Rum institutions, churches, schools etc. but hindered from equal participation in handling community issues.¹¹

And although they are the only hope for its increase of population, the process of integration in the Rum minority is slow and difficult. Their presence at the minority schools where they constitute the 2/3 of the students (250 the total number) is decisive and therefore necessary to overhaul all issues regarding education and culture, and to take serious initiatives to support the feeling that both, the Greek Orthodox Christians and the Orthodox Christians of Antioch constitute the one and only Rum community in Istanbul.

1.3 Paradoxes and legal ambivalence

There are two main issues arising from the above mentioned historical and political developments that lead to paradoxes and legal ambivalence. The first concerns mainly the official status of the Antiocheans both within the Turkish context but also the Greek Minority group. The latter is also connected to the policies of the Greek State. The second concerns the awareness and conceptualization of that status by the Antiocheans and their collective claims and agency.

The representatives of the Western countries at the Peace Conference of Laussane (1922-1923) considered origin, religion, language and race as the features of a minority, while the Turks regarded religion as the only characteristic, and therefore all non –Muslims constituted minorities.¹² From the obligatory Greek-Turkish population exchange

¹¹ Yılmaz S., “Antakyalı Rum Ortodoksların İstanbul’daki Bugünü ve Yarını” (The Present and the Future of the Orthodox Christians of Antioch), *İstanbul Rumları Bugün ve Yarın* (The Greek Orthodox Christians of Istanbul The Present and the Future), İstos, İstanbul, 2012, 223-232.

¹² Atatürk K., *Nutuk* (A Speech) II, TTK, Ankara, 1981, p.554-555.

(30 Jan.1923) about a 120.000 Greek Orthodox Constantinopolitans and the same number of Muslims of West Trace were excluded.¹³

After the annexation of the Sancak of Alexandretta to Turkey(1939) the Patriarchate of Antioch is transferred to Damascus-Syria and the Arabic speaking Christians of the region become a minority characterized at first as “Christians” and later as “Rum Orthodox-Greek Orthodox”.¹⁴

During the sixties the above minority members began to immigrate to Istanbul for religious, financial and educational reasons.¹⁵ Their embodiment to the Greek speaking Orthodox group was not easy due to the historical memory and the language difference with religion being the only common factor not enough to smoothen adversarial reservations. The choice taken by the Antiocheans to send their children to the Greek speaking minority schools, their accommodation and work at the Greek Orthodox-Rum religious institutions eased the rapprochement between the two groups. Nevertheless, their full embodiment has not yet been achieved and although both communities constitute one minority for the Turkish State, the Arabic speaking Christians are a peculiar minority within the Greek speaking-Rum Orthodox minority.¹⁶

To conclude, we observe a continues interplay between the legal terminology and its interpretation by the different parties depending on what is the historical time and what is on stake. The terms ' greekness', 'rumness' have been debatable both in an official level by both the Turkish and Greek states but also the people on the ground creating a precariousness of the Antiochean group. This ambiguity is reflected both in my methodology but also the terminology I will be using from now on.

13 Lozan Barış Konferansı Tutanaklar Belgeler (The Lausanne Peace Treaty Minutes - Documents) (ed.Seha L.Meray), v.1, 3rd edition, Istanbul 2001, p.322-324.

14 Giallouridis Christodoulos, “I Alexandretta tou 21ou aiona” (Alexandretta in the 21st century), *I simerini*, 21.11.2014.

15 Hardalia N., “To fenomeno mias epaggelmatikis metanastefsis: ellinikis ithageneias stelehi stin Poli simera” (The phenomenon of professional immigration: executives of Greek citizenship in Istanbul today), *Sinantisi stin Poli: to paron ke to mellon, Practika Synedriou* (Meeting in Istanbul: the Present and Future, Minutes) (Istanbul, 30/6-2.7/2006),p.265-277.

16 Symeon Yilmaz, “To Paron ke to mellon stin Poli ton antocheianis katagogy Romion-Orthodoxon” (The Present and Future of the Antiocheans in origin Greek-Orthodox Christians).

1.4 Key terms I will be using

I understand belonging in the sense that is proposed by Etienne Balibar, as "both what it is that makes one belong to oneself and also what makes one belong to other fellow human beings" (1991: 97). Balibar specifically speaks about a "sense of belonging" (ibid), stressing the affective qualities of relating to a group. In this sense belonging seems a more intimate way to explore questions concerning the interaction among the 'self' and the 'other' than is possible with terms like identity that seem to imply a fixed 'object' that can be either analytically described in terms of specific and unchangeable content (as nationalism does) or deconstructed (as in the "imagined communities" and the "invented tradition" literature, e.g. Anderson 1981, Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). My inquiry then will not focus on belonging per se, —which runs the risk of ending up being as mere substitute for identity—but instead I ponder the creation and reproduction of that affective 'sense' for the Antiochean immigrants in Istanbul.

To explore this interplay, I rely on Navaro-Yashin's notion of ruination as the "the material remains or artifacts of destruction and violation, but also to *the subjectivities and residual affects* that linger, like a hangover, in the aftermath of war or violence" (2009: 5, emphasis added). Although the buildings the Antiocheans' migrants enter in Istanbul have not been left empty due to actual war (as was the case in Northern Cyprus), I suggest that the metaphor of 'ruination' is still highly relevant in the sense that an "abject quality" (ibid) is being assigned and ascribed by the Antiocheans to create, in this instance, a different kind of affect. If in the case of Turkish-Cypriots the agency of objects left behind by Greek-Cypriots is that of melancholy ('maraz'), in the case of Antiocheans, it is a sense of nostalgia for a past never experienced by them but one that is imbued on the buildings they inhabit. This affect frames their everyday life and their constant attempt to appropriate their living space.

There is, however, a crucial difference that needs to be addressed: the Antiocheans have to come to terms not only with the agency of the buildings but also with that of the shrinking Istanbul Rums. Thus, their "affective space" (ibid: 1) intersects with that of

the Istanbul Rums, a community whose sheer existence is numerically threatened, making affect a novel ground for political antagonism¹⁷.

1.5 Significance of research

My work attempts to provide information about a minority group whose ambivalent presence has been so far silenced and at the same time give information about the contemporary conditions of an officially recognized minority whose rights have been violated.

Although there is a very rich literature on the Christian groups in Antioche as well as the history of the Rum group in Istanbul there is a dearth of published research concerning the encounter of the two in Istanbul. Furthermore there is no work done on the housing experience of the Christian Orthodox Antiocheans within the holdings of the Rum group.

Apart from an ethnographically informed work written by Symeon Yilmaz that focuses on Antioche, part of which is dedicated to how the integration of the Antiochean people into the Rum community relates to their knowledge of Greek, there are only a couple of articles that provide partial knowledge on the shared experience of people. Most of these works focus on state policies concerning education, while others refer to the minority educational system. These refer to state laws shaping the educational system and the future of the students furthermore they can refer to the internal regulations of the schools. Lastly some deal with the content of the education.

I see these works as partial because, focused as they are on the institutional side and the law they completely lack the voice of the people that move through these institutions, both the parents and the students themselves. While there are accounts of officials representing the Rum Community, or of teachers working at the schools, of officers working at the General Consulate of Greece in Istanbul, all of which have authority

17 This is quite different than what proposed as ‘politics of affect’ as seen in the work Negri and Deleuze (Ruddick Susan 2010 - *Theory, Culture & Society* July 2010 vol. 27 no. 4 21-45) where affect is proposed as a possible field of reconstitution of a fragmented political subject. Here affect becomes *itself* the object of politics.

in one way or another, we lack the views of those that this authority is exercised on. In a space and context which is hierarchical as a result of the hegemonic and dominant position of the Rum Community, the discourse of the latter attempts to fix the position of the Antiocheans simply by muting their voices. This muting includes an avoidance of any reference to the hierarchical nature of the relation among the Rum Community of Istanbul and the Antiocheans that live in the communal houses. The everyday life, the voice, contribution and existence of Antiochean Orthodox Christians in Istanbul is almost completely missing, both in the literature and in the Rum official discourse.

Thus their belonging to the same community is merely assumed rather than explored. This assumption creates several problems. The two communities (officially registered as one) are dealt as if they are fixed in time, unchanging and coherent. Obviously we cannot refer to fixed identities, or talk about one single identity that defines them, nor talk about multiple identities that come together and never change. There is a political implication when trying to construct them in a group represented as one. At the same time processes of othering take place which bring in mind Bakic-Hayden's concept of "nesting orientalisms" an elaboration of Said's notion, to apply it to the process of disintegration of former Yugoslavia. In Bakic-Hayden's terms each group tends to view the cultures and religions to its South and East as more conservative and primitive. In the same sense there is a constant attempt by Istanbul Rum official representations to fix the position of the Antiocheans within boundaries constructed for them "*Always wanted there but as a poor relative*", the other of the other, the orient of the other.

What we witness on the contrary is a relationship of co-existence and interdependence of two groups in a constant transposition of boundaries, a process which is silenced. Eventually what is missed is that the two groups move at the same time, however at completely different speeds.

I choose to attempt to tell this story from the side of the Antiochean Orthodox group, because I believe it will provide a much needed account on how its members establish a meaningful life and imagine their future and at the same time conceptualize and manage their membership and participation and contribution in an another, already established group, that of the Istanbul Rum. Needless to say that in this process, fixed ethnic and cultural categorization are constantly negotiated and questioned.

1.6 Chapter outline

The research has four chapters and a conclusion. The three chapters in between include my ethnographic material and are structured to reflect the spatial organization of the holdings. Moving from the exterior of the holdings, the walls, to their most private interior, that of the homes, I try to demonstrate in an organic way this unfolding. This in return reflects the flows and routes of people, objects, and emotions in a way of revealing the different layers between visibility and silence, affect and agency, past and present, hegemony and counter- responses, especially in the instances when least expected.

The second chapter “The buildings”, begins with an introductory section of oral histories demonstrating the arrival of the Antiocheans in Istanbul and the types of intimate relations and oral agreements that lead to their allocation to the holdings. In the next section titled “The faces of the buildings”, I come to explore the personal experience of the Antiocheans within the buildings. This is a process better understood as a one to one encounter. This section is organized into case studies identifying one case with one household. I name the case studies, not after the official name of the holdings but with titles that crystallize a juxtaposition between the interlocutors experiences and my conceptualization and experience from being there. My intention here is to move from the official narratives of how a place is conceived and named, in this case how the holdings are conceptualized by the Rum, to demonstrate that these places have different meanings to different people. Depending on what our experiences are, the way we consume and identify, our background and prejudices, these places each time become something different, thus changing faces. But all these faces co- exist in the same time. Lastly the third section is a summing up analysis section, which discusses the main themes and patterns that arise in a more concluding way.

The third chapter, “The gardens”, begins with an introduction passage defining what the space of the gardens is. In a similar way as demonstrated previously about the second chapter, I present my ethnographic material in the section titled “Faces of the gardens”. Here I unfold the everyday experiences of the interlocutors in open air spaces, usually the yards found within the holdings. The gardens are the products of consump-

tion and reproduction of the yards. The different types of transformation are a one to one experience which however in this spatial category are affected by the presence of other people but also pre-occupied notions of space organization from their homeland. In order to reflect this, I move on with two more sections. The third section titled “Visitors” which manifests the types of encounters with 'others' and conceptions of who the 'others' are. The fourth section, titled “Village in the city” which highlights the ways by which kinship networks, dairy and other food products, intermingle with space. The last section is a summing-up analysis passage which discusses the main themes and patterns that arise in a more concluding way.

The fourth chapter is titled “Socialities” I move along the menial everyday activities through which the Antiocheans appropriate the spaces they inhabit in Istanbul in relation to events in their lives that have a ceremonial character, are in a sense ‘exceptional’ and quite formal. This means that the focal tone is on the encounters than space itself, demonstrating how social interaction and encounters attribute meaning to space. This chapter is divided into five parts. The first is an introductory part where I define the type of socialities that are studied. The next section is titled “Becoming family- becoming visible” focuses on the ritual of baptism and the interplay between religious markers and civic status. The politics of baptism and other religious rituals and how they intermingle with politics of integration and membership to the group. In the third section “Graduating from the Rum School: Education, Language and Integration - Strategies for overcoming distinction “I use a graduation ceremony and celebration, to discuss the encounter of the two groups as moment of co-existing but also distinction. The next section “Other rituals” refers to practices that reinforce the networks of kinship back and forth between Antioch and Istanbul to highlight performances which are mainly defined by the Antiocheans and their agency. What is presented in this section is performance that seem to subvert the feeling of distinction and as counter-narrative bring the Antiocheans in the foreground.

1.7 On terminology

All of the terminological distinctions and challenges above raise two sets of questions: one on how Antiocheans conceptualize themselves and others (including myself) of who the “we” is, who is the 'other', who has the 'right' to be 'here' and under which conditions. The content of these categorizations differs or overlaps depending on the context. e.g. “we” can refer to only the Antiocheans but in other cases to all the Christians in Istanbul, but it also can refer to the Antiocheans and the Rums together.

In order to avoid reproducing the idea of two discrete, fixed and coherent communities, I try to use the words 'group' or 'people' instead of community. Under the name ‘Antiocheans’ I refer to families that have migrated to Istanbul from the villages of Tokacli and Altinozu and live in the holdings together. Also included are migrants from the same villages who live in other areas of Istanbul but keep close contact to these families and the Rums of Istanbul. What seems to characterize (both them and their relationships) is their Christian orthodox faith. The town of Antioch was one of the earliest centers of Christianity (Wallace-Hadrill 1982). The area remained part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the First World War, when it was occupied by the French. This state remained until 1939 when there was an agreement between Turkey, France and Syria. Despite a wave of out-migration of Arab Christians and Armenians (Altug 2002) the area kept its cosmopolitan character including several culturally distinct groups: Christian Arabs, Alevi Arabs, Sunni Arabs and Turkish Sunni (Neyzi, 2004: 287).

During the population exchange between Greece and Turkey as dictated by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 the area was still under French mandate. Thus the Christian population of the area was not included in the exchange. On the other hand, the Christians of Antioch could not benefit from the rights given to the non Muslim population by the same Treaty, including rights such as establishing their own schools. Moreover, they were subjected to the Turkish state’s assimilationist policies. As I realized during fieldwork, the largest number of Christians live mostly in the town of Antakya and in the few villages in the countryside, - among them Tokacli. Until the mid-seventies, very few people from Tokacli had left the village, migrating mostly to Turkish cities, and predominantly to Istanbul. Neyzi mentions that at that time only three families had children

abroad. That changed during the 80s when migration to Europe became quite common, resulting in the creation of what today constitutes a large diasporic community with people in Germany, France, Austria and Norway (ibid: 289).

When addressing the Rums of Istanbul I am referring to the group as it was defined by the Lausanne Treaty. The Rums of Istanbul were also excluded from the population exchange between Turkey and Greece. In terms of religion, they may be characterized as Christian orthodox, and the primarily language they use is Greek. The Istanbul Rums remained all through the twentieth century a 'suspect' group for the Turkish state and were openly targeted through specific policies, official (such as the welfare tax) and semi-official (such as the 1955 riots) that led the number of the group to shrink from a quarter of Istanbul population in 1920s (around 250000) to a mere 2000 people in today's Istanbul that hosts a population over 15 million (Ors, 2006).

In my research, the Istanbul Rums are mainly represented by the officials of this group with whom the Antiocheans meet and keep in touch because of their profession.

All of the above echoes an ambiguity which I came across both in the field but also in the existing literature on the subject. One main problem is how language is naturalized in relation to origin or genus. Both in peoples' everyday discourse but also in academic work this creates connotes a nation state i.e. Syria or Greece.

The word 'Arabic' implies a connection of the Antiocheans to Syria. Since there are Christian populations in Syria and due to the fact that Antioch has been under the influence of Arabs, some of the existing literature refers to them as 'Syrian-orthodox' or 'Suryani'. On the other hand, the word 'Rum', which during the Ottoman Empire had mainly religious connotations, has been translated in English as "Greek".¹⁸ Thus we come across different texts that refer differently to the group as Greek Orthodox Community of Istanbul. What we observe here is how locality is related to the term 'rum'.

18 For an interesting discussion of the Rum versus Greek identity of the Istanbul Orthodox minority see Ors, 2006.

1.8 On Methodology and fieldwork

Throughout the process I came to face methodological but also epistemological challenges. The above mentioned hierarchies influence and affect the presence of the Antiocheans. This was revealed in the process of data collection, and manifestly evident in moments such as fear of exposure, silence and agony. It even meant that some of my interlocutors at various moments expressed their concerns about losing their jobs, and insisted in asking me to keep their anonymity. In yet two other cases I was allowed in the holdings but was asked to keep my observations to myself. Finally, In one case I was asked to visit when none of the officials were present and during a day when there would not be any outsiders or visitors in order to keep my visit and the interview absolutely secret.

There were moments when language restricted my research. Some of my interlocutors spoke Greek only partially or spoke only Arabic. In those cases I used a translator who was usually one of the family members. As it turned out, it was hard to meet the whole family at once. Different daily schedules and working hours made it difficult to ensure the presence of all the members. In such instances, I had to do multiple visits and interviews to in order to record and capture the multiple perspectives of the inhabitants.

As Crang and Cook put it, “*research on social relations is made out of social relations and given the geographical aspects of identity politics, the subjects and sites of ethnographic encounters are intimately related*” (2007: 18). Living in Istanbul for a year before starting my Master's degree, between 2011 and 2012 helped to establish relationships with members of both the Antiochean and the Rum groups in Istanbul. My voluntary work, help and participation in two institutions of the Rum Community (at that time with no intention in doing any research) provided me with an initial understanding of the spatial distribution of the two communities within Istanbul. I had previously visited many of the Rum Community schools located in the area of Beoglu and Fatih and had participated in celebrations for Christmas and New Year's Eve. Furthermore, I attended church services at the Ecumenical Patriarchate and various Rum orthodox churches for at least once every month.

I have also worked with some Antiocheans, as translators in two international exhibitions both during spring of 2014, an international book fair and an international tourism exhibition, while with some others became co-dancers, joining the same folk dancing group. This is considered a Rum dancing team whose members are Antiocheans, Rums, Greeks, Turks and Armenians. Furthermore, I have worked at and co-organized art workshops for children attending community schools as well as a painting exhibition that involved children, between 2013 and 2014 getting an opportunity to meet their parents.

Most importantly, I have established a close relationship with a couple from Antioch from the moment that I moved in a flat in one of the Rum communities' property in Besiktas. The couple is in their mid thirties and both come from Tokacli village. The woman was raised in Istanbul as her parents had migrated from the village in the 1970's whereas the husband has migrated when he was a teenager in order to find a job. They have two daughters and they are working and living within the holding.

As it happened I was often invited over to their place for coffee and dinners. Sometimes we would watch films together, or I would play and help out with the kids, and I had the opportunity to follow them in their everyday life, while being introduced to some of their relatives and friends. After eight months of living on the same premises, I was also honored to become the godmother of their baby daughter.

At the same time I was getting accustomed to stories narrated in constant language shifts between Turkish, Arabic and Greek. These were stories about their homeland - their village in Antioch and their local cuisine in which they utilize a variety of products that they would get either through their often trips to their village, or through relatives what would move back and forth to their home land.

I took part in different kinds of rituals of both groups due to the fact that it happens that I was born in a country called Greece and I am identified as 'Greek'. I took part in other rituals because I was baptized Christian. While yet in other rituals, I was just being an MA student doing fieldwork. Apart from the moments of interviewing people, when the notebook and pen or camera and voice recorder came along, my position was flexible. How to position one-self within this context of constant negotiation? The boundaries of having one 'identity' or the other, being a participant or an observer, being

both at some times, being very distant vis-a-vis some others, are fluid. Where do my personal and everyday life boundaries stop and where does my field really start? How do you present those who do not represent themselves?

Within this context two central issues emerged that should be kept in mind through this thesis: The first issue concerns the rapid shrinkage of the Rum Community under the influence and repercussions of the Turkish State minority policies and consequent developments. The other issue concerns the kinship networks of the Antiocheans that are fundamental for their survival in Istanbul.

Both the Antiocheans and the Rums have been deeply affected in the aftermath of the violent incidents that led to the shrinking of the Rum population in Istanbul particularly by the expulsion and exodus between 1955 and 1964. The migration of the latter mainly to Greece created an 'empty space'. As a consequence this was mirrored as a lack of personnel within the institutions such as schools churches associations, etc. There was a need to fill in the 'gap'. This has coincided with consecutive migration waves of the Antiocheans to Istanbul thus giving birth to a protracted encounter of the two groups. The context of this encounter was both materialistic and spiritual. Materialistic in the sense that the Antiocheans work in the community, for the community, and spiritual in the sense that they practice their religion together. This led to a certain kind of interdependence.

At the same time it created new divisions and distinctions as two different trajectories merged within the same 'ethnoscape'. Appadurai argues that "*Deterritorialization, in general, is one of the central forces of the modern world because it brings laboring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies*". (reference) This formulation fits with the movement of Antiochean Christians migrating to Istanbul. However the Istanbul Rums were subjected to a different kind of deterritorialization, one of slow (with violent outbursts) displacement that led to the diminishing number of the community. However what makes more interesting the encounter of the two is that the two traumas, losing a homeland and being estranged in one's home, can not be reconciled into one.

This is realized, expressed and experienced by the Antiocheans in various ways. Firstly, through the actual agreement to move into the buildings offered by the Istanbul Rum communities. Although being there becomes justified, they very quickly come across the absence of people, of visitors, or people who would consume and use these spaces. Very few attend the church services, even less visit the cemeteries. Many schools have closed down and at the same time in the ones which still remain open the number of Rums students' is on the declines. The Rums in Istanbul are mainly elderly people whose families, children and grandchildren live abroad.

Secondly, many of the buildings are in poor condition since there is no funding to renovate them, some others are locked down, while others are ruined. These visual images of abandonment affect both the Rums and the Antiocheans. In the case that an Antiochean family lives in such a setting they feel vulnerable. Yet there isn't any support from the officials since there is nobody to make decisions about investing in the ruined building.

Furthermore this abandonment is expressed symbolically. The Antiocheans feel honored to act as caretakers of such 'historical' holdings, in the name of the Rums. It is in this way that the past is shared in the present. It is also expressed practically by reconstructing the space of the holdings through their everyday activity, makes the boundaries between history space and their homes blur. The houses in some cases extend into the buildings and the buildings in some cases extend into the houses and during this on-going process the houses become their homes.

The shrinkage and the absences are also used by the Antiocheans in order to express their counter narratives about them being there. They are aware of the power that the need of their presence creates, -and use it whenever they are asked by visitors or Rums to justify their presence.

Throughout my fieldwork I kept coming across the strong kinship network of the Antiocheans in Istanbul. This kept appearing in many ways and for different reasons. To begin with, it is through this network that Antiocheans seem to settle in the holdings. Relatives inform kinship members about the opportunity of an empty house, or holding and the intention of the Rum community to employ somebody. Furthermore they help

with the arrangements and settlement in case one is moving out from an estate in order to 'pass along' what is considered as a privileged position.

In addition, it is around kinship network that most of the Antiocheans' socialization is performed. Most of the time the Antiocheans hang around with close or/and extended family members. They have dinners together, go shopping together, and celebrate together. They seek for spouses and godparents within the group. Furthermore they stand for each other in difficult times, such as illness or death. Lastly kinship relations reinforce informal products exchange from the village to the city, and thus contribute in the economy of the households.

As part of the preliminary work I did some internet research, checking out different sites that would provide information on the institutions of the Rum community. This provided an initial overview on how many institutions which actively carry out community work might employ Antiocheans. This also helped to get practical information such as contact details, the specific location of the institution as well as visiting hours. This resulted in making some preliminary interviews with five members of the Rum group, all of which were officials. With 'officials' I mean people that had or still have an official status regarding the community or that used to work for the community in the past. They are all teachers, three of them retired and two of them still active. One of them is principal in one of the Rum Schools of Istanbul and the other is also the elected president in one of the holdings. I chose to interview these people because their long experience as teachers in the school provided me with a general overall preview of how the Antiocheans were perceived in different stages of their migration but also because they highlighted some central issues of co-existence from the Rum point of view. Lastly some of these interlocutors helped me establish contact with some Antiocheans families.

After the preliminary work, the first step was to locate the families I already knew and try to track down others that might be living under the same conditions. However the people were always helpful pointing out households of relatives or friends living in similar arrangements. I decided then to organize my informants in terms of families or rather -household-. My sample contains ten holdings meaning ten families and the age range of my interviewees in between seventeen and sixty years old.

The reason I decided to do group interviews, instead of interviewing individuals is that in each family there are complexities and differences in how inhabitants experience, practice and conceptualize the encounter. This is true regardless age, gender, occupational variables as well as educational background, spoken language, personal ambitions, strategies or even place of birth. To make this point clear I give an average example of a family in which one parent is born in Antioch, the other from migrant parents in Istanbul, the first is female and didn't take education, or took education in a Turkish school, the other is a graduate from a Greek school in Istanbul. One speaks Arabic and Turkish, the other Turkish and Greek. Their children attend the Greek school, speak only Turkish and some Greek, and then relate to one parent in Arabic. One parent relates only with relatives from Antioch whereas the children get together with Rum children. One parent works both for the community and outside the community, the other doesn't. Children relate to their parental homeland, or one parent has no strong bonds with the homeland etc. Concerning the houses: again, the experience is each time different since the location and structure of the house is different, the power relations with the administration of the 'Vakifs' are different, the public/private space equilibrium varies, the visiting potential and accessibility of the 'outsiders' is different as are the functions of each building.

Respecting the uniqueness of each house and family I conducted a set of semi-structured open-ended interviews with the family groups with leading questions addressed to all, firstly to collect some general information on each family but also let the people introduce me to what is important to them as possible everyday life experience and stories related to it. I had no questionnaires with me. I used a voice recorder in seven of the houses and a camera recorder in three. Furthermore I kept field notes throughout my participant observation and sketched down the ground plans for each holding together with a visual archive of pictures.

In some cases I paid several visits, whereas in others I was only allowed once. I used a main motive of three steps in each visit. Firstly I would take a short walk on my own to get a general idea of the setting. Then I would conduct the interview in whichever part of the holding the interviewees suggested and then I would ask from the interlocutors to guide me around the holding, while asking questions and keeping notes.

However these steps weren't executed in the same order every time. There were a few cases in which I was only allowed to walk around the garden and take notes and pictures without conducting any interview. Finally, in two cases I had the opportunity to talk to the inhabitants of the holdings but was asked not to use the material from the interviews for the purposes of the thesis. There were different circumstances and conditions under which I was allowed in either as a visitor, or researcher but also as somebody familiar and affiliated.

There were three rounds of questions addressed to all. The first set focused on their biographies of migration and arrival to Istanbul. They were aiming in the ways they were allocated to the holdings, the network of relatives in the city which makes this possible but also provides an umbrella of security in terms of socialization. Lastly they refer to their relations to the Istanbul Rums , both in the official but non-official sense.

The second set of questions concerned their navigation, as flows and intervention, moves and pauses within the space of the holdings. My intention was to understand how they conceptualize the official status of the space and themselves within it through the process of consumption and production.

The third set of questions focused on socialities and encounters; on the one hand concerning moments of contact such as with visitors and Rums (official, non-official), friends and relatives, and on the other concerning their participation in ceremonies and religious rituals. My intention was to shed light on how the Antiocheans conceptualize their job as duty but also how they conceptualize togetherness.

One part of my research includes my visit to Antioch last August, and particularly the two villages, Altinozu and Tokacli Koy, close to the Turkish- Syrian borders. I visited the region in August and was hosted in Tokacli Koy for two weeks by a local family, members of which live in Istanbul. There are several reasons why I considered it important to travel there mainly to understand the circumstances under which the Antiocheans socialize and why. Firstly, it was very paramount to see the place that the people I study consider their homeland and with which they hold strong bonds. Most of the people I encountered in my fieldwork in Istanbul travel to the village once in a year, some more regularly some less, and it is a point of reference also in financial terms since a big part of the food material they use for cooking in their houses in Istanbul

comes from the village. Secondly, the Christian population of Antioch that have migrated in this particular time of the year people travel back to Turkey and the village, for the annual summer holiday, so the families and their migrant members all get together. Different kinds of gatherings are planned and organized during this period mainly engagements, weddings and baptisms set at an appropriate time before or after the celebration of the Assumption of Mary on the 15th of August.

During my stay I had the opportunity to meet both, people who stay permanently in the village as well as some of the migrants. A number of the people I met insisted in introducing me to the priests, who originated from the village but lives in Istanbul. He was the first person from the village to become a priest in Istanbul. I also had the opportunity to meet some of the Antiochean youth that live in Istanbul. I did participant observation, visited different houses, the church, the cemetery, recorded with my camera and took pictures of religious ceremonies, wedding and baptism celebrations. Furthermore, I was able to record and take notes on aspects of daily life, which included rural work, harvest, production of spice mixtures, cheese-making, for the drying of fruits and vegetables. Lastly, I registered sites of old houses from the French occupation time, the old school, and a memorial structure. I kept notes throughout the day or before going to bed all along.

I dedicated two days in visiting the city of Antioch accompanied by people from the village. I walked around the city and visited the Old Patriarchate of Antioch, one of the most popular markets and the archaeological museum.

Lastly part of my fieldwork was dedicated to participant observation at some gatherings and rituals. I attended two marriages, two baptism services and two Khena Night rituals, in each case one in Istanbul and one in Tokacli koy. In the baptism that took place in Istanbul, I myself was the godmother. Three religious rituals in three different churches that take part once a year and two (one Christmas, one Easter bazaars). The importance of each gathering is different yet crucial since they constitute spaces in which the Antiocheans perform and negotiate who they are. This includes their contribution in the organization of such events but also the meaning they attribute to each of them. Furthermore through these festivities I could track the connections that they es-

tablish between religious and non-religious social practice. What I understand here is that religion is connected to the gain of civil status.

BUILDINGS

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the encounters between Antiochean migrants and buildings.

The moment the agreement between the Antiocheans and the Rum is made, both parts acknowledge that the Antiocheans' main duty is to take care of the buildings that belong to the Rum group allocated to them. Their duties include all menial jobs, such as cleaning, gardening etc. but also the more responsible duty of the “key-keeping”. Hence they pragmatically and symbolically are responsible for introducing any visitor to these buildings. This is an assigned duty; however, it is through this assignment that space is appropriated. Everyday practice then attributes meaning and content to what a gatekeeper is.

The keys are not mere material objects, but also symbols. Despite finding themselves in an in-between position as “gatekeepers”, the Antiocheans have obtained a certain power over the historical depth they provide, over the visitors, even over the buildings and the Rums themselves.

My efforts will concentrate on trying to understand how the Antiochean migrants create their habitual space balancing between structure and action. I take structure literally as the historically burdened buildings, while action refers to the appropriation of the same space by its inhabitants through their menial everyday activities.

As proposed in the introduction, the buildings constitute affectual spaces imbued with history. The strategies for appropriation of these spaces then is similar to De Certeau's definition of consumption, which is "devious and dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisible, because it does not manifest itself through its own". (1984:11) This is contrasted an ubiquitous production which is centralized and clamorous.

When talking about clamorous production, De Certeau refers to mass contemporary production. However, I use the term to refer to the product of the production process, which in this case is the buildings themselves. It is a long historical procedure narrating a 'glorious past'. In a sense, what we witness in the present is the result of production relations of a past long gone, the repercussions of which are very real today. Capital, labor and power are somehow engraved on the buildings of the holdings (as in any building for that matter), creating the framework in which today's inhabitants try to find their way(s).

The 'buildings' in question are walled pieces of land engulfing houses, ceremonial halls, storage rooms, open spaces such as yards and a central building which can be a church or a school.

These holdings are scattered throughout Istanbul, and they are usually distinct from their surroundings, interrupting the city's outline either by their walls or/ and by parts of the buildings within.

The owner of the holdings is the Rum Minority of Istanbul, which is organized in several smaller communities. This organizational form has its roots in the millet system of the Ottoman Empire during which the different millet (Muslim, Christian, Jewish) were dependent on the 'vakifs' in order to exist. Vakifs were legal persons that could operate through the donations of their members (Tsitselikis 2011:44). The donations were also used for the improvement of what was considered as property of the vakifs and holdings such as religious sites, educational institutions and orphanages. Thus, the Vakifs covered to an extent what today is thought to be a state function. As one would expect, these institutions have undergone several changes ever since the Turkish Republic was established.

1.2 Departures and arrivals: -“Some will find their way and thrive”¹⁹

In Shaun Tan's graphic novel “The Arrival”, the reader comes across a story -in a dream-like fashion, without any words - that seems to find its referents in classic industrial modernity with universally identified migratory instances. The hero packs only what is necessary and fits it in a suitcase, what an armpit can bear to carry: a family picture and some savings. As the story proceeds we see him wandering between 'strangers' in foreign lands, seeking for a shelter.

The Antiocheans are considered diaspora, mainly migrating to Europe.

J. who was born in 1983 narrates how his family chose to move to Istanbul, contrary to the mainstream of migration to Europe:

“We came from the village in the year of '87. My dad and mom came first, and after a while we came along. We came to the church. We were doing fine back at the village, we were... we had a home, belongings, things, but had no jobs, they had always worked in the garden and that with five kids to raise and life is difficult. Difficult for them [parents and co-villagers alike] to study and to go to work, it was hard. Most of them went to Europe, back at that time all of them went to Europe but mine came to Istanbul. They got in the church and my dad became an Acolyte (church candle lighter).”

Although it is rather uncommon for the Antiocheans to migrate overseas, it is very common for them to migrate internally, leaving their homeland and beloved family members behind. This very moment of departure is not being perceived as an opportunity, as a hopeful development, by both the migrants, and their beloved ones. Rather, it is seen as the beginning of poverty and strains.

“I am from the village Tokatsli (Hatay). I was born there; I grew up and got married there. We stayed in Jordan five years. When we came back, R., my son was 48 days old, he had just been born at the end of 1988 in Antioch. We lived there till 1994. My husband completed his military service and then we moved here, at the end of 1994. You know, life is difficult in the village; he didn't have income and property, that's why we came here”.

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This subtitle has been inspired by the lyrics of the Greek song “To America” by Sokratis Malamas, which narrates the migratory experience of Greeks to the United States in the thirties.

M., fifty years old, speaks about the reasons that led to the migration of her family. The family tried its chance first in Jordan. Few years later they returned to the village, but the hardships led yet to another migration, this time to Istanbul.

K., a middle aged man, recalls his 'escape' to Istanbul due to a family matter but also unemployment:

“My uncle brought me here from the village in 1974. My father was against it but I left anyhow. I escaped and came. I was 14 years old. My uncle brought me here, at first I stayed at my uncle's for a few months and then I lived alone. My father used to play cards- he was wealthy but started playing cards, he did not really care about us, there was no work for us - nothing. My uncle said “I'll take you”, he took me and brought me here. I left without my father knowing. I came here, I worked for ten years, sometimes I did send them money, I did my military service and when my wife, T., became 24, we went back home and we got engaged, got married there, our wedding took place there. We had no place to stay, we hadn't thought about it before getting married. It was like “revolution”. We worked here and there, we slept two on each bed, we didn't even have beds, we were young then, 24 years old. And that went on and then we came here to Constantinople in 1984, as a family and not as single men ”.

The interlocutor finds shelter in his relative's embrace. The same applies to the cases of many Antiocheans.

However, unlike Tan's migrant hero, who wonders amongst strangers, the Antiocheans depend on a strong village network in Istanbul, settling in the aforementioned communal spaces. Most of these families know each other; many are very close, or sometimes distant relatives. P. emphasizes:

“I have relatives here of course, many! Besides, we're all relatives as inhabitants of Tokatsli, we are all relatives. There is no stranger in the village. For examples, E. 's brothers are relatives of ours. My sister, S., is here. Do you know her? We are all relatives, our uncles, aunts, their children, they are all our relatives and from the same village. No one is a stranger. But many families went abroad, for example, four of my brothers are in Greece, my sister, my brothers in law etc, they are all in Greece. In Athens, in Philadelfeia and in Zografou, in Chalkida - in every place there is someone”.

Coming from the same place, holding the same origin makes you a relative.

After the first families had settled, other family members were driven to Istanbul, as these informal networks created a safer environment for migration.

“I was born in 1980 in my village Tokatsli in Antioch. I was five years old, I think in '85 around '84 before I began my primary school. For financial reasons. To earn a better living. There were no jobs in the village, that's why we came to Istanbul, I think that's how my parents thought. Many people migrated abroad, to Germany and France, even in America. And to Greece, everywhere. Why did they come here, I don't know, really! I believe because my uncle was here, my cousins, perhaps it was easier. Truly I don't know. We had my father's cousins. Maybe it was difficult financially to go to a European country, and perhaps it was much easier to come to Istanbul.”

There are kinship networks back and forth, from the village to the city, supporting the migration. When settled, the members of the extended family take care of one another, provide food, look after each other's kids when one of the involved parties needs to go to work, even share the same house.

“I was born in 1973 here in Istanbul. When my parents came here they had only my elder sister who was two years old. My mother was pregnant to me. I was of the fortunate ones to be born here. My father at first worked in a factory and my mother looked after us. Then a sister and a brother followed. We are four and we all grew up at Fener. When my mum was here, my aunt, my mother's sister was also here. As a matter of fact she was here before my mum. Also her cousin came after my parents my uncle, my father's brothers and my mother's brothers they were single then. They came to work here and stayed next door to my mum's... My mum explained to us... that from her side there were three brothers and from my father's two – three meaning six young men she had to take care of at home. She did the washing for them, fed them... She took care of all of them because they came... well my grandparents had sent them all. However they did not stay in Istanbul they got married... and then... after a few years left for Greece. I have three uncles”.

The common element among the families I met is that, despite their different backgrounds and trajectories, they end up in these communal houses and undertake the jobs mainly through oral agreements. Although there are hardships that lead to their out-migration, the Antiochean migrants find also fertile soil in Istanbul. It is as if they are expected. There is always an empty space for them to occupy as a result of the political developments and the Turkish minority regime that affected the Rum minority and led

to its shrinkage. There is not an official network that guides these movements, but rather an informal one.

Furthermore, there are certain individuals that seem to hold the necessary authority to put these networks in place:

“We came to Istanbul in 1994, we stayed at the Armenian Catholic Cemetery for two years and then moved over here we have been responsible for this place. My son R. was attending the school at Ferikoy along with D. Bs’ son- may God keep him well, his wife, who is not alive anymore, got interest in us and asked “where are you from?”, “from Tokatsli, Antioch” we told her. “Where do you live?” she said, “at the cemetery” we said, the roof of our house licked with water, there was a lot of humidity and I talked to that lady and she said, she would deal with our case and that she would find a place. May they rest in peace. She talked to her husband and he brought us here. Since 1997 that is, we’ve here 17 years.”

The interlocutor narrates her gratitude to a Rum official who happened to come across their way. This man and his wife, took care of them and helped them settle in one of the holdings. One could say that in the face of the official they see a patron. Somebody they can rely on. Although from a different topology, they first spend some time in the Armenian Catholic Cemetery, a fact which implies that there are other Christian groups that welcome Antiocheans. Furthermore, this implies a network between the Christian groups in Istanbul.

In another case there is a reference to a Bulgarian Cemetery reinforcing the latter assumption:

“I am thirty five years old and I was born in Altinozu. We migrated to Istanbul three years ago. The guy that works at the church is my cousin and his wife is my cousin as well. He proposed me and I came and worked. I applied. Firstly I did some reparations to be able to take this job. Two months after I got hired we moved in this house. We are grateful to all of them. I have another cousin who works at the Bulgarian cemetery”.

The fact that an Christian Orthodox environment already exists in Istanbul seems as an important reason for settling there. Sometimes the official can be a pastor:

“In the beginning we both got a job at Caglayan (Istanbul). Then, there was a priest Father Lefteris, at Altimermer, we used to go back and forth at that place, we had a relative there - he found a church for us and he invited us. There worked for 8-9 months. After that we came here in 1984. We’ve been here since then. We are about thirty years at this church”.

M. explains how her mother, who worked as a cleaning lady, met with the Principal of one of the Rum schools who proposed to them to take over the job of the previous caretaker in the school.

“My mother was going to homes as a cleaning lady. As soon as my brother became three years old we have four children at home. My father at the factory, with one salary of course it was difficult. My mother realized that and decided to work herself. And so, she left my brother either to my aunt or to my oldest sister and that’s how she could go to [clean] homes, Rum Christians and after Armenian homes, to Turkish homes never. And the principal who was here, Mr. M., my mother used to clean their home. And he said that the man who was there was going to become pensioner soon and that they were looking for somebody and he told us if we wanted, but we hadn’t thought about it... that is. We were staying in the church house again here in Fanar. I have never left Fanar, I was born here, I got married here, and continue my life here in Fanar. Eh, we talked with them...we said we should try. And our children small, we would all have insurance, that means we would be paid and after a year we would earn more. And we talked with the principal, we agreed and we both started working. Difficult years of course because I had my little daughter with me – and thanks to my sister in law who looked after her until she was to start kinder-garden . 2-3 years some time with my sister-in-law, some time with her grandmother”.

'Them' refers to the Rum officials of the school, with whom M. and her husband had the oral agreement. She depicts the advantages that came along with such an agreement, emphasizing on the insurance and the increasing salary.

1.3 The Faces of the Buildings

In what follows, I will try to contextualize the presence of the Antiocheans within the holdings. In this part I will focus on the practices that constitute of what I have already (following De Certeau) called consumption of the buildings. This is dispersed because it is revealed or hidden in ordinary daily actions and habits. [] The positionality or the role of the gatekeeper is semi-formal. Undoubtedly, it is something that follows their being given the communal space which becomes their home. However, it is their practices that create and negotiate meaning. This is also devious because it is being hidden behind necessity. Thus, there are no grand narratives of past glory. Buildings are appro-

priated by their inhabitants through action. They use it up and transform it, always in a meaningful way.

1.3.1 Red Roof in the sky

The school Megali tou Genous²⁰ Sxoli [The Great School of the Nation] in Fener was founded after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans (1453), by the Patriarch Gennadius Sholarios. The first director was Mattheos Kamariotis. The school has operated continuously since 1454, providing high quality education. Amongst the graduates were the Dragomans of the Porte, the rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia, scions of prominent families in Fener, several Patriarchs and almost all the bishops of the Ecumenical Throne, up to some politicians of the Greek State.

From 1904 it operated as a Teacher's school. Its graduates were recruited to teach in elementary schools in provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

In the years 1907-1924 there was an Independent Music School operating on its premises. Several graduates were recruited as cantors in various churches of the Ecumenical Throne.

The members of the family living by the school are my neighbors' relatives and it was through my neighbors that I met them. We had spent time together in various occasions. Their house stands in the yard of the school, which is situated on the top of a hill in Fatih, facing the Golden Horn. The school's location and distinct red color makes it visible from afar.

To enter the yard one needs to climb a long staircase. There is a big open area in front of the building, which is divided in two, almost equal, parts, one of which serves as a basketball court. By the end of the court there is a two - storey house, where my interviewee and her family live. Right across the entrance there is a corner dedicated to Kemal Ataturk, entailing a statue and flag poles with the Turkish flag, typical both of a Turkish school and a minority establishment. As most of the yard is covered with concrete, there are no trees or flowers at all.

20 The word Genos in Greek is equivalent but not identical with the word nation. From its latin root genus it has kept its conceptual relation with origins.

To get in the building there is yet another staircase to climb. There are five floors, each used for a different purpose. There is a restaurant situated in the basement, while the ground and the second floor are divided into classrooms. Finally, on the upper floor, there are the laboratories of the school.

I was introduced to the building by a student of the school and inhabitant of the house next to it, who offered to first guide me through the school, and then talk.

She was born in Istanbul, in 1996, and has been living within the establishment ever since. Whenever she is not busy with her studies, she helps her mother with the cleaning.

“This house is nice, very big, but it's right next to the school and this is not good. Ok, I wake up fifteen minutes before the lessons start, that's the good side, but after the lessons finish I'm right back home. That's not nice, from home immediately to school and from school right at home. The worst is that you're in the same school with both parents, you're with them day and night, everything is the same. Thank goodness I go to the tutoring center. I need new friend, new teachers.”

Before we set off to the staircase, she asked for the bunch of keys and as we started climbing she said: *“This is 'the school of keys', there is always a door to unlock in order to reach any place in the school”*.

We visited the classrooms first, made out of wooden floor and wide windows that overlook the sea. The next area to visit was the level with the laboratories. There are three different labs - one for biology, one for physics, and one for chemistry - all constructed accordingly, under what seemed to be an attic. The only window to illuminate the rooms, is at the ceiling. Each lab has an amphitheater - like outline. The student benches are surrounded by storage wardrobes that host measuring equipment, human body miniatures, chemical substances. At the center of the room stands a long marble table used for experiments.

The girl pointed out the numerous bottles of chemicals, in different colors and bottle shapes. Afterward I was led through a small narrow door to a steep wooden staircase, which resembled a lighthouse. When we reached the top, after climbing several flights of stairs, I realized that we were visiting the observatory.

A few old chairs and a tall metallic telescope are the only remainders of the school's once glorious past. The last key unlocked the strangely shaped door that opens

upwards, giving the feeling that you arrive in the sky. We had reached the exterior balcony of the school's dome. *“Almost nobody is allowed to visit up here”*, said H. *“I come once in a while and adore the view. We have the best view of Istanbul, do you see? From the Golden Horn to the Bosphorus Bridge.”*

Later on, when I asked her how she felt about their house, she provided a narrative different from her initial response in the beginning of the tour. *“The view is magnificent and the best view is my room's. I open the window and observe the sea, Halic. During the summer I open the window and listen to music, read books. It's great. That's why I love this house. It's beautiful. Where else could I find such a yard in my life? However, I like a house with a yard but not next to the school, that's it.”*

Her brother is a university student who graduated from the school a few years ago. Apart from being a student, he works as a cantor in a church in Ortakoy. When he is at home and people visit the school, he also engages in touring them around. *“Living here wouldn't make a difference when I was younger since this was natural. While growing older and people started asking where is your house I would show them pictures. It was their reaction of astonishment that made me each time realize how special the place I live is.”*

The experience with their mother was different. I was seated by a table in the entrance hall, right next to a tea kiosk, the place that my interviewee spends most of her time when on duty.

People kept passing by, students and employees, and once in a while we had to interrupt our talk so that she could satisfy various requests. However, she felt comfortable and could easily carry on with our conversation. She carried trays with cookies that she had baked at the house and from the reactions of the people it was clear that she always offers people refreshments from her house. Her mother in law had come to visit from the village. Everyone passing by knew her and greeted her. I was curious about the reasons my interlocutor seemed to want to be exposed to the eyes of her employers.

From this first case-study, we already observe that the family members experience their everyday life within the holdings differently. Their expectations about the future vary and so does their agency. This is revealed through their narrative perception about

the space they inhabit, but also through their performance, gestures and emotional expressions while we move around together.

The elements characterizing their space, are the feelings of emptiness and enclosure, on one hand, and the notion of beauty on the other.

The teenage girl feels suffocated. Like an average student, her teenage-hood comes with restrictions. However, what is unique in her case is the living conditions, bound to a place from the day that she was born, where both her school and home are located, resulting to what she expresses as a non-stop supervision by her parents. She doesn't share moments of freedom, like other kids do, since for her there is no differentiation between her home and her school. No space for her to develop.

On a second level, this sense of enclosure is the product of the effect the buildings themselves have on the interviewees. Although this school is still operating and actually most of the students registered there are Antiocheans, it has been affected by the shrinking numbers of the community. Many of the rooms are not in use any more and remain as empty abandoned useless places. She navigates space in an abstract way, away from its content. She moves around from one room to the next in a mechanical way, without engaging with the material aspect and almost in a hurry. Her corporal actions are followed by the absence of any narrative around her schooling experience, her classmates and teachers or any type of activity related to the school. In a similar way, she doesn't hesitate in front of the show case dedicated to metals and honors, reserved in the entrance hall. This is a collection that shows the achievements of the students all the way back in time. She puts no effort in presenting that to me. She seems detached.

The only moment she relaxes is when we finally make it to the dome. It is as if she was holding her breath and now she can finally breathe in fresh air from the sky. Here is the moment to engage with beauty. It is the view over the sea, from the dome of the school as well as from her room, that transforms her house from a place of suffocation to a beautiful place. It is rather the location of the holding that overlooks the sea that disrupts the feeling of suffocation. It provides some anticipation. It is the outside world that she is so eager to experience and this eagerness is not irrelevant to her age. She is about to graduate, anxious to explore life elsewhere. Furthermore, this is also a result of the fact that she is third generation migrant, so the traumatic past of the com-

munity doesn't affect her in the way it affects most members of previous generations. For her, being in Istanbul seems a natural thing.

In this context, her brother, who is already a university student, has been already experiencing life outside the holding. In this respect, he seems more at ease when he returns home. He has taken his distance and he seems that he has had the time to reflect on what this place is. However, it is only through the conceptualization of others that he realizes the historical symbolism and beauty of the place that he then attributes to be his home. This is also another expression of detachment.

The mother is more settled than her kids. She comfortably exposes herself when she sits in her chair by the entrance hall. It is a gesture of showing that there is nothing to hide and in another respect, it is indicative of her familiarity with space and the people with whom she consumes this certain place - students, teachers and other employees. Living right across the school and spending most of her day there makes the building the extension of her house. The boundaries between public and private blur and this is naturalized in the same way that the presence of her mother in law in the premises is naturalized by the others.

In a second level of interpretation, what we observe in her attitude is a combination of her age and her expectations in life. She is a second- generation migrant and this is her job. She is happy about it, putting an emphasis on the benefits that come out of it. She does not imagine life outside the holding, she has come to terms with this realization and now all of her attention focuses on her children' s future and their next step in life. In other words, the emptiness is embedded in her everyday experience and she has come to terms with the affect of the buildings.

What I find very significant in this case-study is the factor of the keys. It is the first time that this factor appears in my study. The keys can be used as a metaphor or as a symbol of power. The one that holds the key, has the power over the space.

In this case the young interlocutor has some kind of authority, kept for very few. She can access the rooms of the holding at any time and have the privilege of enjoying places within, such as the dome and the balconies and the old observatory. She can have a spacious setting and the possibility of a rare view that most of the other students or the visitors cannot. Furthermore she has the power over the people visiting the place, par-

tially controlling the way she narrates its history. Yet this privilege comes with a burden. All of the rooms are locked, along with the doors that lead from the lower floors to the upper floors. Although H. can access this space, at any point in time, she has to put an effort to visit it. The free flow of movements is disrupted by the unlocking process. Every time the key turns, she has to be faced with the effect of abandonment and the feeling of suffocation.

In the case of the brother, we observe that, although he has a power over the visitors and the historical narration, he doesn't hold the same power about the narration of his home. It takes other peoples' conceptions for him to attribute meaning on what his home is or is coming to be.

1.3.2 School as a mother's face:

The Galata School in Karaköy was founded in 1885 and began operating in 1900. Originally, only male students could register, but by 1935 female students were allowed as well.

It has played an important role in the cultural life of the city, since many of its directors were famous personalities from the field of literature. In February 2012, the Council of the General Directorate for Foundations, decided to return the building of the school which was until then property of the Turkish Republic, to their rightful owners, the Conservancy Community of Churches.

In this case, the family I interviewed lives within a school building which is not in use. To enter, one has to use the main entrance of the building through a façade inspired by classic Ancient Greek architecture. When I visited, the school hosted an artistic exhibition, open to the public, so the main entrance was kept open. To reach the first floor, one has to climb up a big marble staircase. Unlike the other houses, which are situated next to urban gardens, this is integrated in the school building. Obviously, the space of the school had to be rearranged and reconstructed in order to fit in a flat where there was a classroom before.

The interlocutor proposed we should talk in the yard, in order to have some privacy. What she considered as a yard, was a paved rectangular, uncovered space that was

created between the walls of the surrounding buildings that seemed abandoned and bare with no plants and flowers.

She unlocked the door by the side of the staircase that led to the second floor. So it only took one step to enter their private space, to a comfortable, airy sitting room with huge windows running from one edge of the outside wall to the other. The windows were facing the street and overlooked the Armenian church right across.

I had the chance to follow her to the kitchen and observe the surroundings, while she was preparing coffee and cookies. The kitchen was also wide and newly made. *“This used to be a small kitchen before we moved in but it was a mess. My husband renovated it, while constructing a small bathroom that didn't exist. We went through a lot of trouble to bring it to such a state, since it was a ruin. It took one year to clean this place up”.*

Those were the only rooms and I kept thinking about the absence of bedrooms. This big room was divided by the use of sofas to create some space for the dining table. There was a large area covered with flowerpots while the surrounding walls were decorated mainly with wedding pictures of relatives and a couple of religious icons. There was a modern-minimal cabinet across the sofas, which contained a big plasma television and many decorative objects.

She then guided me around the school for a while and then left me on my own to enjoy the exhibition of religious art that was taking place in the school at the same time. When we went touring around the school, she rather focused on the exhibits and not on providing me with any details about the history of the place. The exhibits she focused on were the images of two church templums printed on big pieces of fabric and hung from the ceiling. The one belonged to an Armenian and the other to a Rum Church. The parts of the doors were cut off and, as they had been hung in a distance from one another, it created the effect of a corridor that one could walk right through, giving the feeling of entering a church. My interviewee mentioned the difference between the two conceptions of templums. Before leaving, she unlocked another door to show me their bedrooms. It was the room just above the sitting room with similar dimensions.

There was nothing resembling a school, no furniture left, no books. The reason for this might have been that they had to temporarily take away everything to make space

for the exhibition, as most of the rooms that I had access to were the rooms used for the exhibition. In the biggest hall of all, the one that could have been used as a ceremony hall, there was a second, contemporary art exhibition taking place, but she provided no information about it, as if it was of no interest to her. That hall was very impressive, with old tiles on the floor and a balcony covering three out of the four surrounding walls. It resembled some Jewish synagogues I had visited in Istanbul. On my way out, while climbing down the stairs, I noticed that there was still a Turkish flag hanging from the flag pole, just on top of the main entrance door. The entrance door was made of metal and parts of it were decorated with metallic nails.

Few days later I had an opportunity to interview one of her sons. He is currently a university student and has graduated from one of the Greek Minority Schools. He dedicates a lot of time in the association established in Istanbul by the Antiocheans from Tokacli and has been the president of the youth branch.

“The school Galata has a special atmosphere. Even when you walk through the door you can feel it. It is like walking into a museum. The architecture was perfect. When we came the first time, if I am not mistaken in 1997, I was about 10 years, the school was deserted. We are talking about a ruin. The ceremonial hall was filled with garbage. Burned and scattered all around the place was falling apart. This is an image that hurts. With great effort, my parents began to clean the school and every time they put something extra in it. After two years it opened as kindergarten. Children started coming and I did not even grow up a lot. When you would hear voices in your school it gave me a special joy you know. And I believe the efforts made for this school was a very correct decision. While I was growing up the school was changing. We were were changing as well. Especially me, but many say this, mom has become the character of the school. I personally can not think the school Galata without Maria to tell you the truth. I think she tried too hard, my mom gave everything for this school. To clean an entire school alone is not so easy. Okay we were helping as we could. It was very interesting to see how she looked after it, it was becoming her child. Becomes part of your home. We lived in a special atmosphere and this also helped me to understand how the Greeks saw Constantinople. Graduates of the school came and saw their pictures and they all cried. Difficult. Too much”.

In the second case-study we observe different perceptions about the inhabited place as well as different performances between the mother and the son.

However, they share a common experience which, in the end, seems to blend matter and spirit into transforming a place into a person.

This space is characterized by labor, the feeling of absences and the notion of muzealization.

The house is unique, in the sense of having been constructed within the school, by reorganizing the existing space - some classrooms. Furthermore, it is unusual, since it is organized between two floors, so the bedrooms are separated from the main body of the house in a way that it breaks up our usual perceptions about the orderliness of a home.

The mother identifies with every loci of the house because she and her husband have rebuilt it. There is nothing from the old construction that has been reused; everything is new, the furniture, the utensils, the carpets.

However, when they first moved in to the building, it was a ruin. It was their physical effort to manage with the rubbish that was piling, the dirt, the preservation of the floors, the door and window frames. And it took them a couple of years to bring it into a condition so that it could be revisited and reused both as a school but also as their home.

While we were sitting in her house, she made a distinction between the people visiting the exhibitions as disturbing, in the sense that they are strangers and they create the feeling of discomfort, and to the loud student group, when the school was operating, depicting the latter as a safe period. They knew who they would encounter and what to expect from such an encounter. This was the only time she referred to the days that the school was lively.

Her gestures and attitude changed as she moved outside of what is strictly considered her home. Now that the school is once more closed and it operates to occasionally host exhibitions, there is nothing to narrate about the empty spaces, and she perceives the situation being as such the moment she is asked to provide information about it. She doesn't refer to the past of the community or the school, but rather on her family's odyssey from the moment they left the village for the first time up until they managed to settle in the school. However, she puts emphasis on a religious connotation in two distinct moments. The first one is when she points at the church right across the street, describing the view they have from their windows, and the second one is when she

chooses an installation about christian templums to point out to, when she could have picked any other exhibit. It is her faith and spirituality that seem more important to her.

In a secondary level, the past intrudes in the house from the window, and some kind of identification or spirituality is reflected from the church across into their living room. The other objects that are important are the pictures of her children, which she proudly put down to show me, a way to introduce her family, and lastly her flowers. A big space in the living room next to the windows was kept for her big flower pots.

Her son remembers the process of making the school inhabitable well enough. He has put his own effort as a kid in cleaning and renovating. He also recognizes particularly the efforts of his mother. In the young man's eyes, the school is his mother's face. As if every little part of it has consumed and absorbed his mother's effort and care. As if his mother is diffused within the building.

The son understands the process of preservation and cleanness as a muzealization process. He feels that the place looks like a museum, and it is in this respect that he is able to engage with the past of the Rum Community. He attributes historical meaning to the building, as a place which needs to be preserved for a broader group and not only for his family, and he is very well aware that there are people – a community whose past is connected to the building. He explicitly describes it as a place of commemoration, when he identifies with the need of expatriates Rums (living in Greece or elsewhere) to visit it, while identifying the building with the expatriates' sorrow and grief. Furthermore, he is happy to be one of the people who has made it possible for this community to have a place to visit, a place of reconciliation with their traumatic past.

For the mother, the fact that the family managed to reserve a place, where all members of the family invested both physically and emotionally, and transform this place into home, is a success story.

What is clear is that, for both the interlocutors, the process of preservation has given a second life to the school and this is directly reflected to the family, which had to be given a second chance in return, since they are part of the building.

The Turkish flag was an element which, although not discussed with the interlocutors, drew my attention. Its presence by the entrance of the building was strange to me, since the school has stopped operating for years. The personal effort to hang it and take

it down and take care of it, apart from a silent obligation toward the Turkish State, possibly signifies the issue of allegiance and loyalty.

1.3.3 Turkish Hero

The church of St. Nicholas in Samatya is one of the five churches in the area of Psamathia (Samatya), which are concentrated within a radius of 1000m.

After a disastrous fire in 1782, attempts to renovate the temple were made and, after many difficulties, it was rebuilt in 1834.

Nowadays the church functions during the day of the feast of St. Nicholas and during the day dedicated to St. Fanourios. It also operates some Sundays in rotation with other churches in the area.

In 1850 a school was founded within its boundaries, but was short-lived. During that time the church also had a small stage for the students to give performances.

I met the family living there through a Rum teacher who knows them well and is the godfather of one of their sons. He introduced us during a seminar on “minority citizen rights”. The seminar took place in Samatya, at the reception hall of a church.

I walked with my interviewee to their home, only a few blocks away. During our walk, he told me the story of the neighborhood, where many churches, mainly Armenian and Rum, are present. After roaming around the yard, we moved indoors.

The building is divided into two parts, in the first one there is the kitchen and the living room, while in the other the two bedrooms and the bathroom. One has to cross through the bedrooms to reach the bathroom, since there is no corridor.

The living room is spacious, mainly occupied by three big sofas, one on each wall, and with a window that looks over to the yard.

The stone - built church, which is at the other end of the yard facing the house, was locked and all the shutters were closed.

We moved toward the church. H. fetched a big thick old key to unlock the door of the church.

“This is an old church, a Byzantine church, which wasn't burned. It was during 1955 at the Menderes' era. It was then that most Greek Orthodox

Christians left Istanbul in 1964. They looted and burned everything, but this one was not burned. Nor was the other church because it was in the neighborhood and they would also go on fire if they did so. So a Turkish man stood on the roof and started shouting. He was the one that protected it. The Turks saved it. Because it is very old the roof is wooden."

The main color of the interior was a pale pink; I had never seen such a color in a church. What he pointed out as significant was the icon of St. Fanourios and with his finger he touched it to show me the date it was painted. *"What do you observe in this church? Have you noticed the number of columns that exist? There are twelve one for each of the twelve Apostles"*.

He then turned towards the templum to show me the symbol of an eagle and some items represented around the statue of Jesus Christ on the top of the templum, such as a ladder and a hammer. "These are the objects used by the Jews to crucify Jesus..."

At the opposite side of the templum was a special hall with a Holy Spring and some very old icons. His last stop was in front of an icon that represented St. Michael protecting the church from a Muslim enemy.

When we stepped outside, H. wanted to show me the damaged parts on the walls of the church, caused by the destructive earthquake of 1999.

In the third case-study the perceptions of the family members coincide.

Both parents and children hold a distant position from the Rum Community, but from many of the Antiochean families in Istanbul as well. A great deal of this derive from the fact that the family lives in a part of the city where Rums are very few.

What characterizes the space is a counter -to the feeling of discomfort in the encounter with the Turkish society- narrative. Furthermore, it is the sense of damage and rupture, but also a strong engagement with christian faith. The latter is expressed with identifying the enemies of the faith.

During the tour in the church, my informant engages in all the small details concerning the content of the church. He is very well informed about the story of saints, their contribution and significance. He also points out the dates the icons were painted and also symbolic representations of torture or weapons of protection existing in the temple.

His narrative becomes an ‘othering’ device, either by having the saint protecting the Christians against the Muslim or by pointing (using another religious story) to the ‘immorality’ of the Jews.

However, when he narrates the history of the church through the violent incidents of 6/7 September 1955, emphasis is not being given on the atrocities that took place but rather on the heroic act of the Turkish man. His behavior was not expected, it was against the norm of what is understood as a collective, violent act against the Rum minority or the Christians. Thus, besides the collective a-historical continuities, there are personal (and historically specific) ruptures that reverse the tables.

When moving outside of the church, he points out that the cracks on the walls of the church were caused by an earthquake back in 1999. The earthquake was severe and led to the death of many people. For some people it is remembered also for bringing the people of Turkey and Greece closer, when many firemen, doctors and nurses traveled to Turkey and Greece respectively (an earthquake had also recently hit Greece), to offer their services to those who had been affected by the phenomenon. He touches the cracks while describing his effort to fill them up, “but they never disappear”. They are reminders, like the scars of a wound that was healed, but never fade away.

1.3.4 Prison

The Temple of Holy Mary in Besiktas was built as a basilica and inaugurated on 21 January 1830. The area of the temple is 837 sqm and it has a yard. At the entrance of the temple, there is a Holy Spring of St. Paraskevi and a Shrine dedicated to Holy Mary. On the left aisle there is the chapel of St. Charalambos, which was established by the residents of Vevekios. During 6/7 September 1955, the church was destroyed and its roof was burned. It was fundamentally repaired in 1957. The deed was given back or regained by the Rum Communities in 2005.

Within these premises lives our neighboring family and their house, like my own, is situated within the court yard of the church in Besiktas. What is now our accommodation was originally monk cells and for that reason the rooms are narrow and rather small, resembling those cells.

The church is still in use and there are services held every Sunday and on special occasions.

“This used to be a prison in the past. The convicted prisoners were kept here. Our church was near the beach and it was wooden. Once burned, something happened and then they built it here. And if you noticed, it is not facing towards Ortakoy, ie. the east as it should - instead it looks toward the sea. When you enter the church, the sanctuary should be in front of you, not right as it is here with us. This church was destroyed in the events 6/7 September 1955.”

The family spends a couple of hours daily in the church. It has a strange rectangular shape, as its original purpose was not to be used as a church. The holding used to be part of a bigger complex of buildings that expanded all the way to the sea, part of which was an Ottoman prison.

While the parents do the cleaning, the kids run and play around. They grovel on the big carpets that protect the floor, and, every now and then, the older one explores the upper part of the church, which is not used for the ceremonies any more. This part was meant only for female worshipers who would pray in that distinct section away from the males' eyes. This resembles the mosques, where women pray separately. The family is using this space as a storage room. They keep the woman's dowry, some electrical devices, which are out of use, and boxes with bibelot for different occasions.

My neighbor, who is thirty-four, describes how his profession, which binds him with to building, reinforces his faith. Furthermore, he conceptualizes his job as an opportunity for his daughters to be happy. Being 'closer' to God, makes people happy.

“You asked me earlier about this church, what it means for me. Suppose you sit outside, you wanna go to church but do not have time to get in, for me this place is and the workplace, and I offer service and I get my reward and prayer. Because of this we feel that we are Christians. And my children are not removed from the church. They come to the church every Sunday, even the little one who is not even two years old... and people feel happy. The people that come to visit are aged, young people do not come to church. This church makes me feel that I am a Christian.”

Every now and then, besides the ordinary, almost daily cleaning, my neighbors engage in restoring the swelling parts of the walls. As it happens with many of these buildings, they need a lot of care as they are not well protected against time. There are times

they paint bits and parts, restore some of the icons or varnish the chairs and the window frames, parts made out of wood.

In the fourth case-study we meet a young couple in a very productive period of their life. The space is characterized in terms of its utility, but also its heterotopic dimension.

The building is being used for its initial purpose and as a result, unlike other holdings, the indication of rapture does not manifest in the interlocutor's narrative or his gestures.

However, he provides a sense of continuity by sharing information about the Ottoman Prison, within which there was a small church for the prisoners to pray. Later a larger part of the prison was transformed into a church.

This brings in mind the reverse story within the Turkish context, where many churches throughout Turkey were used as prisons. As the Christian population was forced to leave, empty spaces were created only to be filled by the new state order, fighting against the embarrassment of the void. However the very fact that the holding needs preservation and parts and bits of it fall apart indicates that the community is neither as lively, nor as wealthy as in the past.

My informants seem absorbed by the present and the future; they don't seem to look back - one reason for this is their age. Working for and within the church comes as a double-blessing, since they are closer to what they worship. They are closer to God and serve their religion by taking care of God's house. It is spirituality that takes over materiality in this example.

1.3.5 Punishment

The church of St. George in Edirnekapi is a Basilica which was built almost 500 years ago. It was removed from its original location, since the Ottomans wanted to build a mosque in the place of the church.

I asked a man passing by on the street whether he had ever heard of a church nearby. His answer was that there are many churches around, both Armenian and Rum, "so which one are you looking for?"

As I replied “the Rum one”, he went on saying that there was one right behind the first set of shops; there was nobody living there, since it was a ruin.

I was surprised to find out that it was the house I was looking for. There was no sign indicating the name of the church. I walked down to the other side, which runs parallel to the ancient city walls. From that angle, one can observe the extended upper part of a church. The block is neighboring to a big park, across a mosque. I walked to the main entrance, which was situated right at the corner, only to find it chained. On the steps somebody has left two glasses of Turkish tea.

I was taken to the yard by a small crypt door. My interlocutor later took me for a tour in the church. She told me that the building was about 500 years old and it was originally built by the architect Mimar Sinan, under the request of Suleiman the Magnificent for his daughter, of whom he was very fond.

The foundations of the mosque belong to the church.

We went through a small hall with icons and candle stands in order to enter the main body of the building. The church was dark, the shutters were closed and hardly any light could pass through. I stood still, observing the shadows while she walked down the outer corridor to reach the fume.

“When I was a kid I was afraid to enter the church on my own. It was dark and the icons seemed huge. Someone had to be with me. There was a priest living here and whenever there was a church service, there were a lot of people and we as kids run around in the garden. The church was so beautiful, not like now. There were people I mean. Now, when you look of course, there is no one. We played even inside the church. My mom was doing the cleaning and while doing so we ran around, we were always in the church.”

We took a walk around, during which I had the opportunity to observe the beautiful old carpets and numerous hagiographies on the walls. Very close to the templum, by the end of the left corridor, there was an icon of Holy Mary. We stopped there for a few minutes and then she started narrating a story:

“This is a special icon of Panaya [the intimate name of Holy Mary literally the all-saint one]. Her eyes are dark black and it seems as if they are following you no matter where you stand. I can feel her eyes on me. You know back in time when they got in this place, they entered the priest's house but also the church. It was mostly soldiers and some people from the neighborhood as well. One of the soldiers moved towards the Panaya's

icon and tried to break it. At that very moment he lost his mind. He was punished. For a year or so there were police here. They even entered my grandpa's house which is a bit further down."

In the fifth case-study, the main guide is a university student, daughter of the family that lives in this place. Both her performance in space but also her narratives explicitly manifest the feeling of abandonment and loneliness.

The space is characterized by the violent incidents of '55 and '64, the implications of which become more and more evident as we move along the examples. My informant describes the moment the Turkish soldiers intrude the church to destroy and violate its interior. Although she does not specify the exact date, she marks a determinative decade concerning the fortune of the Greek Minority in Turkey. And in a way this was the final-act.

Another very interesting element is the icon. There is a subversive turn in her narrative when she connects those incidents with the presence of the icon of Holy Mary, for which she shares conflicting feelings. She feels that there is a power emanating from the eyes of the icon as if she is being observed and followed by them. Myth, faith, traumatic incident and materiality blend together in the interlocutor's narration for the church.

When she reflects back to the traumatic incidents, she presents them as if she has experienced them herself; as if she was present when the icon punished the soldier by making him lose his mind. The icon connects the past with the future; it is then a bonding element, used as a device to personalize the collective experience.

It is a common fact in orthodox christian oral tradition that religious icons have miraculous powers. They are thought to have healing, but also punishing powers. There are stories narrated on how a saint appears on somebody's dream, prompting the person to reveal a buried icon, or others on how people who are ill pray in front of the icon and get well. Most importantly, icons 'cry' to express pain, reappear despite having been damaged and persist in revealing themselves when violators intervene to damage them.

Furthermore there are oral histories of christian people in Anatolia, who, in moments of war and forced expatriation or dislocation, decided to only take along with them their domestic religious icons, considering them to be the most precious of all their possessions.

In the case of the Greek speaking Christians settling in Greece after the 1920' s war, the narration is fulfilled by building churches to honor those icons and the saints who protected their lives.

Those churches have served as pilgrimage and commemoration places. At the same time, when Rums from all around the world visit Istanbul, they usually include a pilgrimage to the deserted churches.

Moving away from the icon and the incidents of '55 and '64, the interlocutor provides information on the relation of the holding to the Ottoman Past, by which the status of the church had been affected. There is something about the glory of the Mosque that it is reflected to the church.

Another interesting element is her perception of beauty. Beauty comes with the presence of people who give life to the place, and this beauty is also attributed to the building. By just reversing this narrative, she implies that now that they are no services held in the church, and the place is quiet, it is no longer beautiful.

1.3.6 Fisherman of Besiktas

The church of Holy Mary in the market of Besiktas was build in the 16th century by Karamanlilar²¹ tobacco and wine guilds. It was one of the few that were not destroyed during the unfortunate events of 6/7 September 1955. The church is a Basilica without a dome.

In this case, the family lives by a church in the shopping center of Besiktas, right behind the fish market. A small part of the wall that surrounds the yard, is visible from the street.

An old Rum school of 1930's stands nearby in an awful state, not functioning as an educational institution anymore, and although located on the main street, it is hardly noticeable.

21 'Karamanlilar' refers to the people of the Cappadokian Region, christian orthodox, who spoke Turkish but wrote the words using the Greek Alphabet. With the population exchange (1923) they were forced to go to Greece.

Unlike the other churches that I've visited, this has a very rich interior. There are icons of different aesthetic style and of different periods put together side by side. Most are rare and unique. Several of them belong to Karamanlilar artistic style, while a couple of them are Armenian; for instance the icon of the Forty Saints, which is hardly ever found in other churches. Another one depicts St. Fanourios, the guardian saint of farmers. A chandelier with miniature agricultural tools made out of silver is dedicated to the icon. Gypsum ornaments of flowers run horizontally on the upper part of the walls.

My interviewee lives in the second floor of a two - story wooden building. On that floor there is also a reception hall along with two office rooms. They all share the same wide corridor. The ground floor includes a kitchen, where tea and coffee is prepared for the guests, and two more office rooms, for the stuff that works there.

As we walked in the church H. said:

"It is a historic church and very beautiful. I am very glad that I live in such place, happy to say. Both for myself and for my children. For me there is something very important to offer service to God. I am working with great pride and pleasure. I am the one appointed here. I guard and also work. Along with the other friends that work here. I am happy thank God."

She walked me to an icon:

"Each part of the church is special, how to tell you? Every time I walk in, in every part I come at ease. But there is also another personal reason I am connected to this church. When I was pregnant to my daughter J. and while standing in front of this icon, labor begun. I was attending a church service. Since the labor started in the church this brings us luck, good luck. I got very depressed when they closed it down. Trust me, the father [she refers to the priest] and myself sat together and cried. But we could not do anything, when the father was leaving, he was so sad. The priest served here for years and years. When I came here for two years we were like a family. He was like a father to me and I was a daughter to him. I regret it so much that the church is not open. I gave birth to my children here, they both got baptized here, all were here for my kids. Every time I go through I feel no longer the smell of a church. And it hurts, it aches. No longer the smell of incense, I feel so sad".

Another important moment for H. was when she first met Patriarch Vartholomeos:

"I remember the first months we have moved in this house, if I am not mistaken it was during Easter that the Patriarch visited the church for the service. I was very anxious because it was really crowded. And it was the first time I ever saw him. How to explain it, I was very anxious. It was his

first visit and it was my first time to see him up close. I spent those moments in excitement”.

Our last stop was to the upper floor, which used to be reserved for women to attend the service and watch from up above. There was a big collection of icons made out of wood and placed in lines on the wall. There was an old furniture with very old religious books and some items used during different rituals:

“This is like a small museum, I washed these blessed clothes and holly tablecloths with my own hands. I was the one to iron them, they are very precious. They smell like history”.

In the sixth and last case-study of this section, the main guide is a young mother of two children who works for the church. What we can sense from her attitude is that she experiences her presence within the holding as disconnected and unsettling.

The space is qualified with spirituality and double-layer nostalgia. As observed in previous examples, the interlocutor conceptualizes a special connection to the place beyond her duty as a cleaning- taker.

On the level of interpersonal relations, she acknowledges the leaving of the priest as the loss of a fatherly-figure; she no longer enjoys his embrace in which she found shelter. As she notes, the priest shared the same feelings for her and her family, his attitude towards them being that of a father. Consider the significance of this for a family of migrants being so far away from their parents and beloved ones.

On the other hand, the priest was also her spiritual father which reinforced her emotions towards him but also her connection to the church through him.

However, we observe an interrelation of sadness and gratefulness. She is sad that the church no longer operates, because this has an impact on her personal and everyday life. She now feels detached from a place that reinforced her faith and spirituality. At the same time she is grateful that she was able to serve the church and have her children grow up within its foundation and where she was able to meet the Patriarch– another fatherly-figure.

A key object here is the icon. Her labor to her daughter started in front of an icon in the church. This is something that will accompany her for the rest of her life. It reinforces emotions of gratefulness and respect for the blessing. It connects her to the fe-

male saint figure who will protect her young daughter for a life - time. In this respect, it is similar to the way many women are connected to Holy Mary, attributing to her the role of an intermediary between the human world of suffering and the sacred, by identifying her with the labor, the pains of raising a child, and also with loss.

On another level, the space becomes historical and muzealized. Unlike other churches and holdings which are in a poor condition, this church is indeed impressing and well preserved.

The hegemonic gold color reflection, the way the light plays on the carvings, the rare and unique icons and murals create the impression that you are walking in a glorious temple.

The informant puts personal effort in taking care of the old valuable objects. She wipes up the dust and appropriates their hypostasis. She conceptualizes the space as a museum, not only because of its past, but also because of the material and wealthy imprints. It is not only her eyes that expose her to this scenery every day, but also her smell and touch and it is through all the senses that these objects become historical. The fact that she is asked to take care of them becomes an evidence of how valuable they are and at the same time how valuable her work is. The repetition of this act is then internalized to highlight her contribution to this process. I argue that muzealization here means giving a second-life to both object and human agents.

1.4 Summing-up analysis

The migratory experience of the Antiocheans differs from the mainstream experience of migration because the “in between” homes they establish in the place they arrive are spaces characterized by absences and abandonment by their previous inhabitants.

All this takes place in a metropolitan center like the city of Istanbul, in which any new migrant would feel a bit out of space.

Every new start brings forward a negotiation between what is left behind and what is imagined for the future. What is lost and what is hoped to be achieved. The embrace

of the Rum seems a safe option within the context of the big city. Well promising in some cases. However this choice very soon comes with a burden.

They end up living within tall walls, supposedly protecting them from the strange city; these walls, however, carry a sad and dark history. They foreshadow a momentum of multilayer displacement and detachment.

The Antiocheans have to negotiate and come to terms with the effect of the holdings and the objects within their habitats, even more with the very absence of the Rum, the previous inhabitants. They cannot track back their story, they cannot identify with them. In every step they take in space there is a reminder. The rifts on the wall, the echo of the rusty hinges, the cracks of the wooden staircases, the airstream from the broken windows, the lack of heating. The absence of smells like the incensory, of the sound of laughter. They only hear the sound of their own step and breathe. “The echo of silence is thunderous”.

They seem to launch a fight against these signifiers. In a repetitive mode the buildings are cleaned, painted, the hinges are polished, the curtains are washed and ironed, the icons are restored, and the books are dusted. As if they try to oversee the signs of this abandonment. As if they walk against the effects of time. But, by the time one part is healed, the other falls apart and they rush after this and that, as if this ruination never stops.

What drives this process is the urgency of the Rums to keep these holdings alive by appointing this duty to the Antiocheans. At the same time, it meets the agency of the Antiocheans in the process of making home.

As a result, we come across two parallel processes which intermingle in many instances and are interdependent in a large extent. The value and meaning attributed to the items by the Antiocheans, along with the different conceptualizations of space and their performance within it, creates a narrative about who they are, how they deal with the past and how they imagine their future, both in an individual but also in a collective respect. All of the above are reflected upon and affect their homes.

The objects we are introduced to in this section are mainly muzealized objects which the Antiocheans take care of for preservation; objects they are not allowed to re-use for their own purposes: mainly religious items, old books, fabrics, icons, paintings.

However, the muzealization process comes as a consequence of their contract with the Rum communities rather than their initial aim.

In many instances muzealization seems to generate a second- life, although this effort seems to eventually be doomed to fail. There is nobody to visit the 'museums' but themselves and very few members of the Rum group, who already have an organic connection to the holdings. This is a rather self - consuming situation, which, at moments seems very mechanical.

The section titled “ The faces of the buildings” begins with a strong symbolism of the keys. This refers, in a way, to all Antiocheans working within the holdings. They hold the keys to the gates and all the in between spaces of the buildings. They are the gate-keepers of the holdings. This means they hold authority and power over the flow of people in and out of the space, but most importantly they intervene with their daily performances on how the space is being transformed. The “gate-keeping” process gives birth to heroes and anti-heroes for both groups and it brings in mind the metaphor of the Thermopylae. The Rums that managed or chose to stay behind, after the 1950s, are perceived by the official Greek and Rum narrative as the heroic figures, who maintained the last pieces of what the community once used to be. Simultaneously, they are perceived as the anti-heros, as the people who were left behind to deal with the trauma, the fear, the destruction and the humiliation in the years that followed.

In a similar way, the Antiocheans become heroic figures, since it is their labor that keeps those places still alive, but also anti – heroes, since they are left to deal with somebody else’ s trauma. As if the cycle of mourning – commemorating – catharsis, will be completed by them.

In this direction the effect of the buildings, which is not always manifested or conscious to the Antiocheans fermentation, leads to a feeling of sadness and enclosure to the extent that even when they are given the option to leave the holdings and the buildings, they do not choose to go. Even when it is not being manifested in their performances, it appears in what they choose not to do, in the topics about which they choose to keep silent. In the silence and the pause. It is as if the buildings are consuming them. As if this consumption is embedded in their skin and their souls.

The icons attribute spirituality to self-identity, but also bless and protect the homes of the Antiocheans. Furthermore and most importantly, they protect the community. In one of the cases an icon has punished the one who turned against the community, the Turkish “other”. The icon as an object possesses more power than usually allocated to it. I apply this notion in the broader context of this analysis to point out that, in a way, what is not explicitly spoken of, highlights the disproof of a long gone expectation that the icons will protect and guide the people all the way through. Have the icons been silenced for good?

We also observe that there are many references to Armenian churches. The Antiocheans acknowledge their presence in their neighborhoods and in some cases those churches reflect beauty and recollection to their homes. This identification reveals a bond to the religious cousins, the Armenians, with whom they feel they share a common past of suffering and distinction, as Christian populations, within the Turkish context.

However, we have one case where the story is reversed, and we have a Turkish hero protecting the church and not the icons. In this case, the Antiochean, the young interlocutor has to identify with this hero he never met, and conceptualizes his effort to take care of the church as a continuation of the heroic deed of a Turk.

The physical destruction of the buildings serves as a parallel to the physical destruction of the community. As long as the buildings stand still, the community stays still. As long as they stand still the Antiocheans will be present, or, differently put, in order for them to stand still the Antiocheans are needed.

This symbolism of preserving or resistance is then attributed to the community that has suffered.

GARDENS

2.1 Introduction

These gardens are pieces of land within the city that serve like small oasis of green in a desert of concrete. They are spatially and materially the intermediate space between the buildings and the houses of the Antiocheans. To be precise the gardens serve as the symbolic in-between space between the official rhetoric of the surrounding building and what is considered as their private space, their home. Furthermore, as these gardens receive the inflows of visitors and commodities they become nodal points of networks stretching from Hatay to Istanbul and beyond.

During my fieldwork one of my interlocutors visited our garden and over coffee we talked about a parrot that has been resting on the trees of the garden every afternoon. It was worthy of wonders how it had survived outside its cage, in a hostile city environment. However my interlocutor had an explanation.

“This parrot isn't alone; there are many of them in this area. Two years ago, or so, they escaped from a big container, not sure if it was from a train or a ship and they settled in the gardens of the Dolmabahce palace, within the years they multiplied and inhabited other gardens like this one along the coast. You can find them in the garden of the Saint Fokas church, in the cemetery in Ortakoy, in our church in Arnautkoy”.

One can observe here that parrots settlements coincide with the network of communal houses and gardens inhabited by Antiocheans. In this case parrots become “good to think with” (Levi-Strauss, 1962). The birds are not in what would be consider as an appropriate place for them to live however they have managed to survive and thrive. In

a parallel way the migrant families have found a way to root and expand within the city, in a seemingly hostile environment.

Unlike the buildings that surround them, the gardens seem less charged with a grand historical narrative leaving it 'free' to perform in it all those mundane everyday activities that define it as a space where identity can safely be performed. What enters this space is already in a way accepted. People (visitors) and objects are then pigeon-holed according to ready made categories through which they are appropriated. There are visitors (official), guests (non official) and objects (commodities) that all mix in order to assign meaning in an environment which becomes far more intimate than the surrounding buildings. This intimacy created is put under threat by intruding official visitors. This on the side of the visitors is seen as a moment to reproduce social distinction – looking after gardens is their job but also something that they do well as they are villagers, thus confirming their social status. In this sense habitus in Bourdieu's sense is put into play in order to make sense of the un-familiar, a producing garden in the cityscape.

However, the setting in the city was not initially built to serve these purposes. They benefit from what they find as already structured and transform it into theirs (their space and house) (Miller, 2000)). They transform it to fulfill their needs. They make a choice here. They could have ignored it, use it only as a playground for their kids, they could feel uncomfortable with it and turn their backs to it so to speak. From the possible options they choose this, a choice they earmarks any meaning production that takes place within this space. What's the urban-rural relation? It is the everyday practices that make them conceptualize the space as privileged, they feel comfortable here. They can perform without a sense that they have to fight for it, without speaking up for it. It is the space where structure and internal hierarchies are reproduced, what is considered bad or good.

My intention here is to bring forward the interplay between the Antiochean agency and the structural limitations that form the canvas of their everyday life. Their agency, more specifically in this case the degree of 'freedom' to intervene to their yards varies and depends on one hand on the community and the interest they show on each different estate. My aim is to unfold these different examples as they appear through

my ethnographic work in order to crystallize this interplay. After grouping the different cases I will try to describe how the Antiocheans negotiate these so to speak ‘degree of freedom’.

2.2 The faces of the Gardens

2.2.1 Of wax and wood:

The first time I approached the church and house in Edirne Kapi I walked up and down trying to locate the place, took the wrong route, but then decided to move towards a building that seemed run down surprised to find out that it was the house I was looking for. I walked around the walls only to find out that one of the garden walls was bending outwards ready to collapse. What was used as the yard was a space that was bordering the house on one side, the church and the two exterior big walls on the other and most of it was cemented. There were flowerbeds on the base of the exterior walls and a wooden garden table with two benches right in front of the church’s main entrance. My interlocutor walked me along the side of the church. However half way through we had to stop due to a mass of logs on top of a bench that created a dead end. She pointed out to another building within the block by the end of the church and a man standing there:

“... and in our garden, we can’t go anymore. In the past, and when I say past, two years ago, strange people started coming, you saw them at the back... now we live with strangers. It belonged to the church and still does ...there are there since the earthquake, we cannot get in there. Now those people, I didn’t understand how they got in there, suddenly. One day they managed to settle there”.

Some Turks had been using the building to breed doves and they had a dog barking all along making it quite tricky to go closer. This was a two floor yellow building that seemed to be in a good condition.

“We’ve never met them. No, no! They aren’t good people anyway. In the past they also used knives and stabbed others, that kind of good people. And

afterwards my father pushed them away. We are not well here, I mean the environment, the area where we're living."

We went back to the front yard, to the other side of the church. There was a small passage created among the church wall and the outside wall of the site that was leading to a second house. Parallel to the house facing the church wall was a shed that looked like a storage room. At its end, on both sides of the passage there were handmade constructions for storing logs with a tin top to protect it from weather conditions. Wild grass and plants were growing all around, empty plastic flower pots scattered here and there as if someone has thrown them away, a rusted bicycle, balls of rope and a green hose.

"In the past, the garden was cleaner and a lot more flowers and the trees were not like that, but now... how did it happen... I mean they grow again but not like before, I'm afraid that something has happened to the environment.., how can I say it..it's not like the older days, in the past we had neighbors but now there is nobody. You've seen the houses, their look. When I was young, it was much better, they were very beautiful. We spend most of the time outdoors, but now, the last few years we don't want to go out, to leave the house I mean. We have a garden but we don't grow anything because the soil is not enough and it is not good. But there is no interest on that part".

My interviewee walked me all the way to the end of the passage and told me the story of the house. It belonged to the priest of the church, but ever since he passed away nobody lives there. His daughter who lives in Greece visits once or twice per year and that's the only time that the house 'opens'. *"Some strangers wanted to steal things from it. Yes, they got in this summer, from the back side and took things. She does not take care for it.*

I observed on the wall just above the entrance door was the construction date, 1906. There were white thick curtains hanging on the two windows, on each side of the door and the shutters were half way open. A fig tree has covered half of the house. What attracted my attention on our way back to the front yard, was a wooden carved icon next to the storage room door. It was strange to see it being exposed to the weather conditions. I was told that this room had been functioning as a candle workshop.

"There, was the storage room for the church of course. You can get in the church from there as well. There is a door and my father said it should not stand like that so he fixed up the place to make candles and things like that. The candles were both, for our (church) and others. It was nice! I don't

remember how the wax was made but my mum made it, she also helped. He would put it inside, then he would raise it, he did something then he would let it dry. The material he used was paraffin ...it was nice. But I wouldn't sit and watch him. Later with the "keria", he gave up, left and opened a shop."

I decided to open this section with the particular case-study because I believe it serves as a bridge between the previous and the present chapter, shares common features with the previously discussed themes but also provides an idea of how differently this chapter is to develop.

The very thought of a garden inclines our imagination to picturing flowers, greenery, exciting odors, the presence of animals and all those elements that connote a relaxing environment where nature unfolds its beauty. In this particular example very early, we come across a reverse scenery. The space of the garden is characterized by notions of estrangement, abandonment, fear and violation. The key elements are the walls and the intruders.

All of the gardens included in this study are defined by the materiality of walls. They are surrounded by tall walls, the height of which, differs in each case. Nonetheless they are signifiers of protection keeping out of reach whatever is enclosed within them. In an attempt to explore space from its outer boundaries towards its inner arena, one will first of all encounter walls that are falling apart and what takes place in the garden seems that is shaped by that.

My interlocutor describes an environment, which is not safe anymore a fact that is manifested in her bodily gestures as well. The moment we move towards the settlement of the Turkish people, she slows down her speed of walking, leans her body backwards to avoid being seen and turns her voice into a whisper. She feels restricted within her own garden. There is danger leaking through the crushed wall in their territory and nobody is there to protect them. However there is something fussy about the neighborhood as well. The renovation and gentrification projects running in the neighborhood, have created absences. Many surrounding buildings are torn down which have also led to piles of garbage, and one can observe ruins here and there. One can use the metaphor of infection and dirt (Douglas, 1966). The air, the environment surrounding them are not clean anymore are polluted. Whatever strangeness means, the Muslim society, the big city and the isolation it creates, finds its way through.

This is also demonstrated by the condition of the garden. Objects of various kinds are scattered here and there, in no order, exposed in time and weather-conditions . It is obvious that the family pays no effort in making something out of it. The only place that shows any signs of living is the cemented area which extends between the doorstep of their house and that of the church. This area is not visible neither from the streets nor from the back yard where the intruders are. Any type of activity, from small gatherings to hanging laundry when the weather allows it, plays out within that small place. This seems like a claustrophobic feeling where the inhabitants are left with no choice but to enter deeper in their house and give away the joy of the garden, or the joyful emotions of taking care of the holding. This is also evident of the affect of the holding.

What I personally find quite interesting is that, in the interlocutor's narratives what repeatedly appears is a characteristic gap or disruption between the causes and the results of the ruination, as if what has taken place has slipped under her nose, several times. In a second level when she identifies with the incidents of 55 and 64 to refer to the violation of the priest's house she implicitly draws a line of continuation between the past and the present as if this place was condemned from an earlier period and as if what happened then was the beginning of a series of incidents piling the one over the other, leading to this alienation. This is embedded in her.

In this background of hopelessness there are elements portraying moments of nostalgic euphoria. The interlocutor juxtaposes the present- unpromising life experience to the past, when the priest was living in the premises, as a moment of secured liveliness -attributed to the holding. This forebodes the presence of people and the existence of a group or community, which no longer thrives. Lastly we observe that the remains of the candle workshop, generate warm childhood memories indicating that there were promising periods in the past, when there was an intention and agency from the part of the Antiochean family, to intervene in space and to actually create a small candle workshop to further support their income.

The only thing resisting against the conditions of ruination is the wooden, icon-like curving on the door of what once used to be the candle workshop.

2.2.2 A joke over death:

The cemetery is situated at a big crossroad, just few meters from a Turkish cemetery. When entering, the first thing one comes across is the backside of the house by the walls of the cemetery in the corner and a group of hen nibbling around. The house made it impossible to see the rest of the cemetery but as one walks to the front yard the cemetery unfolds, it caught me by surprise. A deserted cemetery, with gray old graves scattered here and there.

On one side of the cemetery, along the outside wall, there were handmade temporary constructions, made mainly out of wood. The first one was used as a storage space for gardening tools. Its front side was covered with an oilcloth that could be rolled up to enable reaching the tools. Next to it was a wooden hennery and next to it an even bigger open-air hennery surrounded with a plastic net fence.

Remains and parts of the graves were scattered on the ground or against the trees. Some had become part of the soil and I had to step on them while walking. Here and there jabbed into the ground there were metallic crosses, some leaning as if they were moved out of their original position, or placed temporarily to indicate that there were previously graves there. Further there were remains of graves of different style, somewhat resembling protestant cemeteries. On these there were carvings of the figure of Jesus. The rest were made mainly by stone and marble. From the rupture and the exposure to the elements they had turned dark and in many the letters inscribed on had faded away. In some others you could still identify the picture of the dead person as if they kept resisting time.

Many of the graves are used by our hosts in various ways. Every now and then I could observe a ball or a plastic toy abandoned on a grave. Some graves were used as storage for wood, or were hosting big plastic deposits of water. Others were used as platforms for flowerpots and one as an improvised bench for children to sit and play.

The slope in one corner of the cemetery has been transformed by the family into a big garden where they cultivate vegetables: peppers, beans, tomatoes, aubergines and fruits such as strawberries. In the corner created by the wall along the buildings and the

big street there is a beehive. What I observed was that there is a wooden wall ladder from one of the outside houses that leads to the beehive inside the cemetery.

We had a little chat over our coffee cups and while interpreting the fortune signs the female host described her feelings about living there.

“I felt awkward having to live in a cemetery but I got used to it later and now I feel lucky that we live in such a green space, which is quiet, where my children can play freely outdoors and we can have our vegetable garden, chicken and fresh eggs. It is however difficult to get out of the surroundings of our house, since we have to take care of the place as part of our duty, plus the fact that everything is so far away and takes a lot of time to go to the center of Istanbul. On the other hand I have gotten so used to such a peaceful environment that I could not stand the noise and the crowded city center”. Her husband continued “It is a very good job, better than others. More relaxing than others. It is organized in a natural environment, among trees and fresh air.”

After the interview when the tour in the yard was over they invited us to stay for a barbeque dinner. This took place next to the graves and it was a unique experience. We all went commenting and wondering on how the Turkish neighbors would react if they could observe us from their windows. After a point it was so dark that we had to light up candles to be able to see each other. In general this dinner was the reversed reality of what one would expect in a cemetery, both in terms of how the cemetery looked and how we were standing within its boundaries. At night one would expect dozens of cressets burning candles whereas that evening it was only our candle on the table trembling.

This image of isolation was different regarding the cemeteries I had previously visited which were well preserved and crowded. Many of the graves in those were big constructions, made out of quality marble, many of which were family graves, some in Hellenistic style. What I observed from the overall condition of the graves was that a common element in all was that most of the dead were buried during 1950s and very few up to the 1960s, and only two graves with later dates, as if time had stopped back then.

“There aren't many guests because for years a Turk used this place and stayed here. There is no owner of those graves. In the past everybody left and went abroad. From time to time only people who know I am here might visit.”

One more interesting detail was the fact that when I asked my interviewee about the bees and honey I was informed that it isn't his and it belonged to one of his Turkish neighbors. It turned out that whoever that person was would climb down in the yard by the wooden ladder. This is something that they found it already happening before they moved in. He didn't mention any contact with that man, but rather admitted that he is planning to have a beehive for himself as well.

As we move to the second- case study we observe a subversion of what the previous examples demonstrated. This is being realized in two ways. The first relates to the original character of the place, a cemetery signifying the end of life which is understood as the last home of a person – thus initially considered- a non-lively place, or a place within which eternity is generated -an eternal home-. What it originally evokes is the feelings of sorrow, grief and pain. The second refers to the shift in the pattern of practices and conceptions of the inhabitants, the interlocutors.

The family is consuming different parts of the cemetery to self- maintain and supply their household with meat, eggs, vegetables and fruits. Parallel to this they use other parts to turn them in leisure spaces. Through this process the space is transformed and appropriated to meet the needs of making a home. At the bottom line all the practices result to the preservation of the cemetery and in all different respects we observe a constant interplay between life and death.

As the female interlocutor narrates her initial feelings from when they first moved in, we see that her emotions are ambiguous. There is awkwardness in establishing a life next to the dead. The thrilling atmosphere creates discomfort but this comes with a realization that the dead are left alone. As her husband points out hardly no one visits the cemetery. In addition to the narratives a small walk around provides evidence of the abandonment. The materiality and condition of the graves reinforce the notion of ruination as they are falling apart, and parts of them are scattered here and there. Furthermore the tombstones take us back in time and speak about the incidents of '55 and '64 since most of the graves are from that decade as if time has stopped, in a place where it had already stopped back then. As the interlocutor explains, many Rums were left with no option but to abandon their homes, or were expatriated from Turkey and there was nobody left to take care of this place.

However life continues, for this young couple and their two kids. The same way that in one of the corners of the cemetery one can observe a big tree which managed to develop over a gravestone by literally enclosing part of it in its bole. The 'absence' provides space for the family to develop within the boundaries of the holding. Very soon after their arrival they started cleaning the place which was dominated by tall wild grass. Cemeteries are sacred places, within the Christian orthodox faith, thus stepping on a grave, depositing items of everyday use, sitting on them, would mean violation and disrespect. In this case we see that this place through the everyday practices of the inhabitants has been transformed into an intimate and everyday space. Co-existing with the dead is normalized almost in a way that you forget that it is a cemetery, and new uses are attributed. When they talk about the garden, they become very fond of their flowers and their vegetables, which manifest their labor and agency. They point out to the hand made swing located between two trees where their children play. This indicates the shift in the meaning of preservation where the latter is demonstrated and conceptualized like beautification. Here I am using the idea of beautification as it is discussed by Devora Neumark in her article on the practice of house beautification as homemaking amongst forcibly displaced.(2013). It is through these everyday practices that the place becomes beautiful, clean, organized again, and this is reflected as beauty in their home. This also highlights a positive attitude about the future. At this stage of their life, they are investing in a prosperous and comfortable tomorrow and their point of departure is a big green garden where they can enjoy nature, contrasted to the cemented city that surrounds it.

Finally this positive attitude is reinforced by the fact that the neighbor 'outsider' is not considered a threat. Instead the outsider which is conceptualized as such and not as an intruder only inspires the interlocutor to establish his own beehive in order to produce honey for his family. At the end of the day he is one of the very few 'visiting' the cemetery. What has happened in the past belongs to the past and co-existing with the Turkish neighbors is something inevitable.

2.2.3 A view to the sea:

Three of the four walls surrounding the yard which runs from one side to the other, were high protecting the interior from being seen from the street. The forth wall however was shorter facing the Marmara sea and the interlocutor immediately highlighted this fact. *“There is freedom, we’re comfortable here. Our garden is nice; the sea can be seen from here. We have some picnics sometimes in the evening. Our garden is quiet, nobody comes, only Mr. A.”* This came with surprise since nothing from the outside of the holding indicated the access to such a horizon. But this feeling of surprise was further reinforced by the fact that this yard was blooming. There were bushes of flowers everywhere and my senses were evoked in a constant interplay between rich colors and sweet smells.

The space was divided in three distinct parts. The first one includes the patio leading to the house. Fruit trees were surrounding the patio and huge flower bushes gave the impression of strangling the house. Further down between the church and the reception hall there are round flowerbeds with seasonal flowers and trees. Many of the flowerbeds and the small walls dividing the space of the yard for different purposes, seemed newly brushed with white paint. Next to them one can still recognize the remains of a spring and a tunnel leading to the third part, below the vegetable garden. When I asked my interlocutor he replied that *“There are two more springs one in the church and one in the neighboring plot of land that belongs to the church but at present it is rented to a Turkish family. If you observe them carefully they are on the same straight line. They say that in the past the tunnel led to the sea”*. The surrounding stakes belong to the church, and the community rents them to others mainly Turks from the neighborhood. I was informed that the premise was much larger in the past. The remains of a construction resembling a house, is now used as a territorial marker, leading to new subdivisions within the stake. At the same time it is used in relation to the reception hall to host a pergola covered with grape leaves and a set of benches. The municipality name is inscribed on them.

“The benches you see around were brought to us by the municipality after a telephone call from me. There was nothing here. Most of the trees were planted by my parents. In front of our house were only stones like these

ones. They fixed the patio by using cement covered by tiles”.

Under a big cherry tree there was another wooden table with two benches hosted birds. We set there for a while to observe the view and talk about what takes place in the yard. From what I observed , paint containers and cheese tins are reused as flowerpots which are here and there, some of which are concentrated around an outdoor staircase, the steps of which are used for drying herbs. A number of the pots have been painted white while others are left to rust. The interlocutors family love animals and they take care of a number of cats that go in and out of the garden. The signs of nests hidden well between the branches of the trees was only one indicator of nature's planning but we could also hear the loud woodnotes, as it was reaching our ears with waves due to the breeze.

“I am fond of animals; we have many cats as you can see. It is even written in the Bible, that humans should be together with the animals. However we pushed them away. We've got squirrels and green parrots. Once in a while we see snakes in the yard. Few years ago a long black snake appeared and we somehow managed to kill it. When we mentioned this to Mr. A, who is responsible for the holding he told us that we shouldn't have done so. The snake was the protector of the church. Every church has snake protectors that belong to it. I feel sad ever since, but we didn't know it back then.”

When I interviewed the father and asked him about the garden, he told me that as long as the weather allows it they spend most of their time outdoors. With so many plants there is a lot to do during the day. All of them need water which in it self is time consuming since there don't posses an automatic irrigation system. Meeting the needs and characteristics of each plant they fertilize them, train and harvest them. However they deeply enjoy the sense of being in nature. They sleep under the pergolas during the hot summer nights, they watch movies with their sons. However sometimes they feel alienated since hardly anyone visits the holding.

“Back in the earthquake of 1999 we opened the yard to seventy people and we lived all together for three months. We shared our food. Our neighbors love us. Most of our friends are Turkish. We had no other option. There are no relatives, there is nobody left to drink tea, to make barbeque to drink alcohol and chat.”

In this case-study, which is the third in the row, we observe that there is a move-forward, from the effect of the affect of the buildings, as described in the second chapter, to a situation where the agency of the interlocutors is more dominant.

Although signs of absences and ruination are manifested both in the interlocutors' narratives and the materiality of the surroundings, yet the space of the garden is mainly characterized by the open horizon, natural beauty and the labor of the Antiocheans to preserve it.

This is the first example in which parts of the walls are low enough to allow an over welcoming view and the glances of the inhabitants are able to rest between the blurring lines of the sea and the sky. This in itself creates a sense of freedom. Besides, from what is brought into the yard, the inhabitants have achieved in creating a coveted place which is consumed in different ways. It reminds you of fairy tales and the mythical hanging gardens of Babylon. However this came with a burden, as it took them years to maintain it. Most of the trees that now are mature enough to produce fruit were planted by them, and all the vegetables and herbs are the results of a year to year repetition of cropping. Anything that can be used they consume it. They make jams out of the cherries and the pears, liqueur, vinegar. Furthermore they reuse old tin and plastic containers to cultivate part of the plants. They dry the herbs to collect enough supplies for winter.

In addition to the above, the garden is used for leisure, relaxation and gatherings. What we observe, especially from the last narrative that refers to the earthquake, there is a moment of sharing and co-existence with Turkish neighbors which overcomes and contradicts with any collective and historical memory of the holding. In recent years a natural disaster led the family open the doors of their home to other people, since they were the only ones holding an open air space. They hosted the people for a long period of time and they shared their food. This created new friendships and bonds which remain strong even fifteen years later. However these bonds and encounters come to meet the reality of the shrinking community.

In the area where the family lives there is hardly any other Rum or Antiochean family with which they can relate. The interlocutors refer only to a man called A. who is a member of the Rum community responsible for the holding, as the only one who vis-

its. In a situation where the doors are usually locked, we have a vocal story which suggests a subversion. This is significant in two ways. Firstly it manifests a different perception of the mainstream 'other' and secondly it is a contrast to the usual situation of the holdings where most of the time encounters do not take place. The natural disaster bypasses political reasons of distinction and brings people together.

To add more flesh to this reality we see that for the first time, there is a signifier of visibility and connection with the outside world. By narrating the story about the benches, the interlocutor implies that the community is still recognizable and visible in the eyes of the Turkish municipal authorities. But it also means that he holds some authority too.

Another element that is manifested is that of spirituality. One can clearly pick out a relation between spirituality and nature together with the preoccupied intimacy towards the latter. This is the second time in this research that another interlocutor refers to the story of the parrots' arrival. Yet these are not the only animals mentioned by the family. Although the presence of animals in such an environment is expected there is spirituality attributed to some. We get the opportunity to encounter the story of a black snake, which used to appear in the garden and the family killed it out of fear. The interviewee confesses his guilt and disappointment that identifies their act because the snake was the protector of the holding. The image of the snake appears in many cultures and religions as the symbolic of devil, of science, in other cases as the protector of households and instruments of saints.

To conclude, the family living in these premises consume the space of the yard in terms of household economics but also for leisure. The preservation meets beautification rather than muzealization. However what reappears as a question that needs to be answered is of how people feel free in enclosure. This example informs us with flows from the outside to the inside, from the city into the holding and the yard. But we never see the reverse. It is as if the inhabitants have no other option but making the best of the space which is given to them and never go beyond the neighborhood. This is contrasted to the city out of the walls, which is hostile, enormous. In addition it is reinforced by the big yard and the view compared to what the experience of living in a flat could be. Lastly and above all this marks the boundaries of their agency.

2.2.4 Hen house: tradition or privilege?

On the back yard of the school the family has created a small garden with vegetables and holds a small chicken house. They have a pergola with a dining table underneath it, flowers and trees. It is usually the dad of the family that spends time there. The chickens are his while the rest of the family doesn't intervene. The young interlocutor walked me around to pin point various elements in the yard with which she identifies.

"I grew up here every day I'm in and out of the school yard. When I was young I played with the dolls, I was always outside in the yard, with my bicycle, with my brother playing basketball, volleyball, nice. When my dad is back there my mom also goes, they sit there, she makes coffee and reads her books. I like a house with a yard, but not next to the school".

As we discussed she mentioned that the students sometimes were allowed to walk in and out the garden. The back wall of the school supports the temporal storage constructions and the hennery. There is an iron fence running vertically from the school wall to the outside wall of the yard preventing the chicken from getting through however they find their way and escape sometimes.

"I have nothing to do with the chickens. I love to eat eggs but.. It is my father that loves it. We have about ten, during summer you cannot find him in the front yard. He's always at the back with the flowers, the chickens, we also had a dog which means that while I was growing up we always had a dog. But is is my father who takes care of the flowers, the trees, that bear fruit".

On the other end across the hennery a small space is separated to create a rose garden. My interlocutor walked me to the wall to point out a small marble monument behind the roses.

"This is dedicated to the memory of a lovely dog. It belonged to the previous principal of the school. We were all so fond of it. When it passed away he thought that we should bury it here".

Another member of the family chose to take me to the front yard of the school. This was mostly cemented hosting the football and basketball courts.

"My friends would visit and we would play for hours in the yard, football basketball, those were great times. We used to do this up to our fourteens. Then we all grew up and started running to tutoring courses or some started to work. We lost track of one another".

In the fourth example, we observe that the family members hold independent views and perceptions about the yard and this is both reflected in their perception about space but also in the labor they invest into it.

Space here is characterized by leisure where different hobbies can take place but also with nostalgia. It is mainly the father who puts in all the required physical effort whereas the other members of the family enjoy the privilege of having a garden without contributing in its preservation, they spend their time there to rest and enjoy the shadow when the weather allows it.

The young female interlocutor, the daughter of the family, seems the most distant. We can sense a feeling of detachment which portrays a performance expected from a guest. However she identifies with the grave of a dog. In some of the holdings one comes across commemoration structures like small sculptures or shrines dedicated to a Rum family or a priest. These families had usually financially contributed to the community that they were registered to. Here for the first time we come across a commemoration space dedicated to a pet. She mentions that while she was growing up the family would always own a dog and she enjoyed playing with and taking care of it. For the boy the yard is more a nostalgic space rather than a functional one. It is a reminder of his childhood. His narrative highlights a moment in the past when the challenges of present adult life were not yet affecting the visits of friends and the limitless outdoor games.

This comes with the realization that times have changed him as well. Finally the mother puts emphasis on her books. She usually sits in the garden to enjoy a cup of coffee which accompanies her reading. It is the only woman throughout the research that mentions a preference in reading books, underlying that there is time for such an activity to take place, but also her perception that women have the same right as men to get educated and they are not only bounded to the housework. Her positionality together with the attitude of her young but adult children raise in a broader sense the issue of what is considered modern and what traditional. What we observe here, demonstrates a conjunction of, on one hand, competing lifestyles and present experiences in the metropolitan city of Istanbul and on the other practices that conceptualize a past life or origin from a rural area, that of the hennery. However we see that they both co-exist without

fixing the people in constructed categorizations which results in turning the whole experience into a privilege.

What we observe in this case is that in the setting of the yard there are no signs of ruination. The family is living within the holding of a school which is still active and as a result it has been throughout the years, without interruptions, taken care of. Their attitude towards the garden is relating also to the nature of their job which is mainly to take care of the school and its interior rather than the garden. The cemented yard is also another limit to a bigger plantation investment. However in the space which is allowed the father has developed a hennery which apart from being a hobby, contributes to the household with dairy products such as eggs and meat.

Finally we learn that the garden is sometimes shared with and by the students as well, implying that it is not perceived as merely theirs. It serves, in some cases as a semi-public space as well.

2.2.5 Micro-climate insulation:

This garden is situated very close to Bosphorus and there is a boulevard passing right outside its walls. When one enters the yard through the heavy metallic door, feels that has been transposed to a distant place since there is hardly any sound from the street reaching the interior. There are big trees in different corners of the estate and one in the center surrounded by a circular flowerbed that imposing the feeling that the yard itself is circular. Right across the entrance there is a big wall running from one side to the other covered with plants in some of its parts, while there are some hanging flowerpots decorating some others. The floor is a mosaic made out of stone and was created back in 1906 the same date as a large part of the buildings. On the right hand side between the church and the ceremony hall there are three graves. One that belongs to a priest, the second one is a grave of a Rum Family and the third one, is displaced on the pavement with its curving damaged by weather conditions make it hard to read the letters. Spending time here I've noticed that the children would expand their games even around and on top of the graves. Unfamiliar with death and at the same time with the innocence that overcomes the distinction between sacred and daily space.

On the left hand side there is a belfry on the base of which there is an old spring which is still in use. Wherever the wall adjoins the floor there are flowerbeds with flowers fruits and vegetables. One afternoon on my way back from work I entered the garden only to find it covered in crates of different sizes, containing a variety of flowers in small plastic pots, ready to be planted. My neighbor and interlocutor was there, carrying soil and reorganizing the flowerbeds for them to receive the new flowers. I was surprised to see such a big collection, considering the cost. In my question he replied that it is the municipality that brings these flowers for free.

Many times we would sit in the yard and they would point out different birds that come and build their nests. They know what time they fly around, which the couples are, how they feed their little ones. For a long time they would insist on a bird couple who found a hole in the wall and one could observe the heads of their little ones bending outwards. The parents cut the wood for winter in this space, dry fruits and vegetables in the sun, hang their laundry and welcome their guests. When talking with the family in the garden the interviewee said *“regarding the vegetables and flowers they are in our blood, in our mind, to love nature”*.

In the last case study of this section we meet a family, in a yard of a church in which regular services take place. This signifies the presence of many visitors.

The space is characterized by the tall walls like in previous examples which serve however like a sound and temperature regulators. Furthermore it is shaped by the heavy demonstration of green. The family spends many hours in the garden, in every opportunity. The two little ones, explore the world that lies within and below, as their game is many times preoccupied with encountering bugs, worms, playing with the cats and learning a lot about the life circle of birds and flowers.

In a similar way, the young couple, the parents, also enjoy the life that unfolds within the yard. They put a lot of effort in keeping the garden clean and tidy which is expected by the Rum as part of their job, but also cultivate fruits and flowers for their own consumption. Many of the vegetables and the fruit-bearing trees were planted by them and in many cases with seeds that were brought from their village.

The interlocutors' performances demonstrate deep intimacy and familiarity with nature. Furthermore they identify with perceptions of beauty that are attributed to it. A

beautiful garden reflects the beauty of a home , in this case theirs. To add more flesh to it I draw attention to his quote where he uses the words of blood and mind to emphasize a more organic connection. I see this also as a point of departure to indicate a relation with their homeland. A village in a rural area of Antioch.

2.3 Visitors

Gardens beside being a living memory of the homeland are first and foremost the place of socialization of the Antiocheans, the place where 'encounters' take place. It is there where the Antiocheans perform their role as gatekeepers welcoming visitors of the buildings and visitors of their own. Hereafter I will call the first 'official' in the double sense that they might be representatives of an office (such as important members of the Rum community) but also that they reinforce through their presence the office of the Antiocheans as gatekeepers and protectors. More specifically then official visitors are those who visit the buildings out of interest for their historical significance or those that visit in order to 'use' the establishment in its original form. The first group are usually tourists coming mainly from Greece (either in groups or individually) including those that are not Christian Orthodox, while the second are members of the Rum Community that go to the church to pray, or visit the schools in order to participate in a festivity.

In each holding there are specific visit hours that the door is kept open to the public. In addition the community can always inform the inhabitants to let in visitors out of schedule. In some other cases, especially regarding the churches, the Patriarchate is also involved, providing a special permit to people to enter:

“Thanks to Mrs. Vivi (principal of school) who says if we want we can open it if not, not to, because we are closed on weekends. If of course we get a telephone call from the Patriarchate or from the Consulate and it's an important person of course we'll open. And Mrs. Vivi notifies us that somebody will come, then certainly, but if somebody just want to come when we don't know what he is, he don't. He might seem nice, asking to take a photo and expect for other things... That's why we don't take many in, we tell them to be done...”

However Antiochean's are expected (by the Rum in charge) to let visitors in, pass them through the garden and tour them around. Furthermore, usually after the church service on Sundays visitors and Rums in charge are seen through the reception hall and the Antiochean serve refreshments. During this the latter socialize with the visitors but they are expected to perform their role as if they were not present, functioning as the living facade of the holdings. However this becomes a task as visitors themselves create discomfort and unease. Furthermore the Rums that are present in an official role, attempt to control the behavior of the Antiocheans. In this sense, seems that the gaze of the official visitors becomes the reminder of their performative capacity, within the limits of what otherwise is their intimate i.e. creative space. On the other hand, the visitors that come as tourists seem to perceive the Antiocheans as "matter out place" (Douglas, 1968): their presence there is questioned "*where are you from, why don't you speak proper Greek, who is really in charge here...*". Mrs M. who works in one of the Rum schools describes such a moment.

"Many schools from Greece visit. From what I have observed so far the students have not behaved well. They come here and don't respect the space of the school. They shout and run up and down. However some of the teachers are not respectful either. There are moments that in front of us they ask 'What about the Arab-speaking people'. They have heard other people here talking about us in this way and it seems that they are familiar with it."

Or similarly any kind of restrictions in access out of normal visiting time becomes an opportunity for visitors to remind the Antiocheans their 'proper place' "*I have been living here long before you, I have every right to enter*". This reaches its peak when visitors become curious and try to intrude in zones that fall under the strict boundary of the Antiochean's home.

In this context those Rums that feel their responsibility to overlook the behavior of the Antiocheans, either because they hold a position within the community or simply because they members of it, actively engage in this act of control. They look down on them commenting loudly on their bodily gestures, they comment on proper language use and they tirelessly repeat the proper etiquette. In one occasion, over tea, in the presence of the holding official an Antiochean joked with me friendly. The Rum saw this as an opportunity to practice her duty and scold the Antiochean in private, pointing out

“Johan!!! You are not allowed to hug and joke with the visitors, she is a lady and she might be insulted. She isn't your friend”. Or and in reference to language use: “You should try your best in order your daughters to learn Greek. If you talk to them in Arabic and Turkish they will never manage to improve it”. In a similar way, another interlocutor shares his experience, “Nowadays of course, we don't live in peace because we have many visitors who we don't know. In the past we were better, when there were students, they would come at 9:00 and leave at 3:00. After that, we were alone, nobody bothered us. Now, it's not that quiet. Because there is an exhibition, people come around all the time... That's it and nothing else”.

However there are also those visitors that create to the Antiocheans a different kind of affect, such as fear for complete strangers that invade the intimate space of the garden baring unknown 'gifts' and intentions.:

“It is not certain who comes or what they think, how should one know what is on somebody's mind. Two days ago a group of Americans came, about ten people. They were asking various things. I was very friendly with them, I offered them tea, I answered their questions as much as I could. It was nice. Sometimes Muslims, come and in a way they criticize. Few days ago, a student came wearing a turban, she said she was a student that wanted to take pictures. It was five o'clock and at that time we don't open to anyone. I opened the door for her and she entered. Afterward she asked me if we were happy here and I told her that of course we are. She was trying to say something, and then at the end she said 'you will go to Hell'”.

One might think that this is also related to the ‘outside’, an overcrowded city, a place of danger par excellence as opposed to the safe haven of the ‘inside’:

“A few visit. If they are many they have to get a leave from the Patriarchate because you didn't know them, they might do something to the church, something to happen, for that reason we don't let in whoever comes about. Seldom one or two people appear- they say ... to light a candle, but if they are many, you can't take them in. I it's forbidden. If something happens, we are responsible. Now in Istanbul you can find of every kind (people), you can't trust. For example they ask what's in here, what do they do with this, they show curiosity. If someone kills you, nobody will notice it. M. stays here alone during the day we are all at work, that's why we don't open.” or as another informant points: “We used to open it but all sorts of people came, we weren't sure what would happen. That's why we don't open it. If we have the right from the Patriarchate to open it, we do so. We don't have a permanent priest Father George comes, the same priest. ...He opened it once – once and never again.”

Rums then compared to strangers that can even be 'Turks', are assigned the role of the guarantors of the Antiochean presence as the rightful 'owners' of the buildings, and their absence intensify the sense of threat. Nostalgic narratives idealize a past when the community was vibrant and thus there was nothing to fear.

“When we first arrive there were many Orthodox Christians. It was nice then, they would come, did various activities, now there is no more left. They helped, but as time went by, they became fewer and fewer, 4-5 old women come, you talk to them but they cannot hear you, nobody is left, the same women. When we first came, they were many now 3 or 4 are left. Oh, there was also an old woman who came. Helen, 85 years old. The same faces, they come and go. Since we came here at least 30-40 Orthodox Christian died, seven priests- in the past every church had its own, now they have all died. Those priests are young they have 4-5 years of Priesthood.”

However as I have already mentioned, there is a second group of visitors, who in a way and in contradiction to the officials, represent the intimate self. I refer here to their friends and relatives. For them no special permission to enter the building is needed, proving that questions of authority and control can be undermined and bypassed. They can ring the bell at any time, and have free access to all spaces. Friends and relatives visit for coffee or barbeques, and in the case of relatives they might even spend the night over. These visits constitute most of the Antiocheans' social life. This in part is a result of their job as the attendants of the buildings. It is part of the agreement with the Rum communities that at least one part of the family should stay back and look after the estate.

“I am here most of the time. I cannot leave the place because in case something happens I will be responsible. You know there are valuable things in the holding. Also who will look after the garden, who will water the plants?” Or, as another interlocutor narrates *“During the time that the school is open we cannot be absent. This means that from September to July we are here. There is always something to do even in the evenings. Some cleaning for example... Somebody has to open the door to the electricity man, to open up if a worker comes to fix things. So we get very tired sometimes and then we don't like to move around much. We prefer to sit here and relax. To visit somebody takes a lot of effort and I cannot stand the traffic and going long distances.”*

In some cases they have a day off during the week, always in relation with the functional needs of the establishment. Thus, if in a church the priest usually is not at-

tending once a week, this creates a day off for the Antiochean inhabitants as well. This is the day when they pay visits to friends and relatives, organize their shopping and carry out all other obligations. For this reason the largest part of their social life revolves around their own guests. Most of the times they are close relatives who live in Istanbul, some living also in community houses, performing the same duties. Contrast to what happens when the official visitors are around, during the visits of 'their people', the inhabitants of the estates they can act in a seemingly unconstrained way. If their visitors come during official hours they usually stay indoors, away from the eyes of official visitors, while their hosts continue their duties checking on them once in a while. They can use the house space, relax, watch TV, play or babysit the kids. It is in this context that intimate social relations are reinforced creating a 'we' that supersedes the family. In the case that they are seated in the garden they try to be silent, not to attract the attention of official visitors and thus creating discomfort to their 'own'. However there are times in which they help their hosts with whatever the task might be, that is cleaning the garden or helping with the performance of a ritual during church service. In such a case their presence needs no more to be silenced and the Rum officials see that as quite 'natural'.

At times Antiochean visitors prepare meals to reduce the work-load from their relatives and wait until their duty is over in order to eat all together. Common meals are quite important not only in the sense of sitting around the same table but also because through meal preparation a certain idiom is practiced. They all know how the recipes are carried out, where to find within the kitchen the spices or pastes needed, how much time the oil needs to dissolve the aromas of the spices, etc. It is as if habitus is performed and through that, space is being appropriated. *"We eat spicy food, the Rums here don't. We use a lot of pepper sauce in the food and even eat raw chilly peppers in many of our meals, even some of our children do."* This common idiom of food connotes their homeland through another way as well. Most of the ingredients shared in these common dishes come from the village of Tokacli further reinforcing the idea of an intimate space creation, an island in a strange sea.

"You cannot find this spice here we bring it from the village, it is called Zahter, and the cheese that we use for breakfast is from the village as well, even the bread. It is our typical bread, we bake it there and bring it here, put it in the refrigerator and warm up some pieces every time we desire".

Eventually these common dishes escalate into small celebrations.

“Our relatives come and we have these nice barbeques, even if the weather isn't nice I light the grill under the balcony. I usually cook all of the meat together with one of the men that helps me and the women prepare the salads and the rest of the food in the kitchen. We chat next to the fire but have the privilege of being the first to nibble. The kids enjoy it too. It is nice to take care of everybody”.

In certain cases relatives stay for longer times than just a short visit. Nephews and siblings might stay over for one or two days. Sometimes this is a short vacation and other it is convenient for children that are attending a tutoring school nearby.

“We host my husbands nephews, usually during the weekends when they have their tutoring school. We are like parents to them. Especially G, he treats them like his sons. My sisters in law visit as well. We are getting along well. The elder one especially we are very close. We spend the night together and she likes to see my daughters. Sometimes we watch movies in the big screen before going to bed”.

There is yet another category of informal visitors, relatives again, this time coming from Tokacli. *“Relatives from the village. During the summer, everybody comes. When the weather is nice, we are all in the yard, we serve fruit, nuts, it's nice to talk to people, they all say something. It's nice and this is still being practiced”.* These are usually parents staying for a longer term either to provide help on domestic duties (taking care of children) or are themselves in need to be taken care off. Usually in the latter case they move every one or two months to a different child so as everyone shares the responsibility.

“My mother was left alone when my father passed away. Few years later she got very ill. Since she needs somebody to look after her it is us that take care of her. Mainly my two brothers and their wives. They also live close by to one another. For some months she stays at one brother and than to the other. Of course she stays here as well but for a shorter period of time. During summer when time comes for her to go to the village we usually arrange that one of us is there, we accompany her to the village and usually my brothers drive all the way to Hatay in the beginning of the season and by the end of the vacations drive her all the way back”.

It is through this reciprocal sharing that the kinship network becomes central in practical and symbolic terms. During this stays people tend to share sleeping space as

well not always out of practical need, performing in yet another way 'village life' in the city.

Despite the fact that most of the informal visitors come mainly from Istanbul or Tokacli, there are still others that remind us that the geography of the kinship network extends outside Turkey as well. Relatives and friends who from Tokacli who have migrated abroad also visit:

“My sister in law came here in Easter with some Greek friends of hers. It's been a year however that I haven't seen my brothers. Four of them are in Greece, my sister, my brothers in law, they are all in Greece. Some in Philadelphia and Zografu in Athens and some in Chalkida. In everyplace there is someone. But God willing I will see them in August”.

In this few sentences one starts to conceive that kin members create a diasporic network on its own right, keeping family and homeland as its main referent.

“Many families went abroad. In Germany, Norway, France, Greece... but we are all relatives as inhabitants of Tokacli, our uncles, aunts, their children, they are all our relatives and from the same village. No one is a stranger”.

In this section we move away from practices that appropriate space to practices that appropriate the behavior of the Antiocheans. In addition the notion of “gatekeepers” holds a different meaning. In this case it is the literal rather than the symbolic value of the term, which identifies with their job. The yards besides being transformed into gardens for the Antiochean homes are also places that receive a flow of visitors. Thus signifying a variety of encounters among the Antiocheans and others that basically in other terms means that they consume what in moments is conceptualized as their private space, with others.

We have to keep in mind, that as previously seen, in other parts of this study, the flow is mainly from the outside to the interior, implying that the Antiocheans are grounded within the holding.

The 'others' can be distant, foreign, affectionate and intimate, but all come with expectations which in the end try to fix the Antiocheans into space. This means fixing them in the dynamics and power-relations that each encounter produces, to fulfill expectations, something that the Antiocheans are well aware of.

From the official Rums one would expect the remarks addressed to the Antiocheans to refer to their performance as employees, but we rather observe criticisms and remarks that reproduce distinction based on bodily gestures and language. This leads us to the Foucaultian notions of docile bodies and supervision. The Antiocheans should appear friendly, but not intimate, proper but not distant, and above all should speak an expected language which isn't their own, is the language of the Rum group, the dominant language, Greek.

From the interlocutors' narratives we understand that what lies beneath this approach is a broader debate about the integration of the Antiocheans in the Rum group. The issue of language becomes central and it is understood as a prerequisite.

The visitors who identify more like tourists come with their own prejudices. They behave according to their conceptions about the holdings they visit. Both from the participant observation but also the interviews we become witnesses of strange behaviors. People become rude and persistent up to an extent that the Antiocheans become invisible, especially in the extreme cases that people want to intrude their homes, or that there are questions evoked about them to third parties, although they are present.

Then both the symbolic but also literal connotations of gatekeepers is triggered. Being a gatekeeper means that what comes to your door is not always something embracing but you have to let it in. In this way however we see that the walls don't always protect. But on the other hand is a chance for the Antiocheans who hardly ever leave the holdings to get exposed to the rest of the world and this comes with a burden.

Lastly, we become familiar with another category of visitors which are other Antiocheans, their relatives and friends. These are represented by the interviewees as the intimate self. They share a language of gestures and performances that needs no negotiation but also a spoken language, Arabic, which does not need appropriation. As it happens with many migrant networks which are reproduced away from the homeland, the Antiochean network in Istanbul, coincides with extended family bonds. It contradicts the experience in the big city where people lose track of one another. They behave like a family, when they exchange and share food, they meet and support one another in various ways. One significant element they share is that of the food culture. In this respect

and as a counter distinction to the one reproduced by the Rums , the interlocutors emphasize on what the Rum cuisine lacks from. Food brings the affect of homeland all the way to Istanbul and in their homes particularly.

However what is not spoken of is that the network and consequently homeland itself comes with its own regulations and appropriations of behaviors and expectations. When we relate this fact to the construction of the counter-narrative (which thus is at the same time instrumental) we see that there are power-relations within their own system that they cannot always overcome. To put some flesh on this, in one of the examples we see that a young couple has to host nephews and other relatives and this is expressed as a noble thing to do, but this also implies that the privacy of their everyday life is triggered, as these people can show up any time and they are expected to be taken care of, no matter what the condition of the hosts is.

2.4 Village in the city

What happens in the garden serves as an analogy with what happens in the village. Both on how space is constructed as well as in regard with the content. The Antiocheans come from a rural environment where gardens are structural elements of production and household communality. The houses in the village have usually big covered spaces that lead from the road to the yard of the houses. These spaces serve as a passage through which people and objects (produce and commodities) circulate in and out. It also serves as an intermediary stop between the street which is the public space and the private which is the house. When in the city they carry this image of organization of space which entails this encounter of private and public. Thus, the gardens of their new houses fit their already existing assumptions about the organization of space.

In most of the village houses one can observe a sheltered patio leading from the road to the interior yard that sometimes is a back yard and sometimes a big balcony. This vernacular architectural element is common in old and new houses alike. This in between space seems to mimic the house's interior, furnished with furniture in a sitting room or a dining room or both. From there people can enter to the house proper or

through external staircases visit the upper flats, and also they lead to storage rooms and baking ovens situated in the garden. This is where people socialize, where the family gathers. It is the place where they first meet every morning and their last meeting point before they go to sleep. There they prepare part of their meals, cooking their food, take a nap during the day, talk about serious family matters and host their guests.

When I visited the village, during summer, there was a prevailing atmosphere of preparations for the winter. Tokacılı is a predominantly agricultural community with fertile land, full of gardens and fields watered by running water and drills. During my stay there was a constant upheaval every morning resembling a ritual. Everybody would start their day around five in order to start gathering crops and they would return approximately four hours later. They would strew the floors of the sheltered patio with oilcloth and plastic to topple on them the buckets of vegetables. Then they would distribute in smaller washbowls one for those that would be used for the meal of the day, another one for those that would be set to dry under the sun and a third one for the ones to be pickled. The women squatted on rags and mats to spread on matting okras, aubergines and courgettes. Tomatoes were opened in four pieces or sometimes cut into slices and after being sprinkled with coarse salt they would find their place under the sun. *"Other need light, other shade and breeze".*

The kitchen counters were decorated with plastic bottles filled with handmade pomegranate vinegar and there was a small corner on the floor devoted to oil and olives. Other products like cheese, flour, coffee and spices followed the same route. First they made a stop in the yard and then found their way in the refrigerators, stored in cupboards or placed on dining tables.

Summer is the time that most of the migrant families 'return' to the village. During the period they spend there, family members participate in the process of collecting and milling daily products. On their way back to Istanbul they carry such an amount of goods, enough to cover their needs for the whole year.

"The products we bring from the village are natural. Whatever we make we bring it here. We make them with our own hands and we bring them. Cheese, peppers, olive oil, spices, all kinds of spices, onions, the best of all the onions from there, bread. We bring them either by bus or car and we bring ten sacks. For the whole year".

However their involvement with cultivation varies, as some visit the village again during cropping seasons for short periods of time. Furthermore the families find ways to hoard these products during the year in case they run short.

“We visit only during the summer, for one month. But, if again something is finished, we’ve got relatives there, my uncle’s son, we call them and they send it to us by transportation company or by bus. May God keep them well! We also get sweet squash, everything. Have you tried it? Künefe?”

Lastly some products are transported to Istanbul raw and are processed in their gardens there in a way similar to the one they would have been processed in the village.

“From the village we bring everything: pomegranate vinegar, tomato sauce, coffee, bulgur, pepper sauce, even eggplants. We bring them, we chop them up, we boil them for a short time, and then we put them in the freezer. Even our pepper, we bring them from there.”

In this circuit of production and consumption intimacy and affect stand side by side. What my ethnographic material suggests is that there are two kinds of circuits that run alongside. The first is defined by the fact that these products are given as gifts while in the second food is commoditized, sold and bought in a rather informal market. In the first case the producer is usually a close relative, first degree, sibling or parent. In case that the people involved in the exchange process are distant relatives usually there is money involvement.

“We don't buy them from here because everything is natural, you know it, furthermore, you get it from people you know, they make them themselves are cheaper, cleaner. The goods from here cannot be eaten, for instance, olives, cheese. You know, the people there make their own pepper, but here you can't tell [know]. Everywhere they add something in them – those here are not good, thus we bring them from there, even our coffee. Arabic, black coffee. Shall we make you some coffee. How do you drink it? We bring our coffee from there. What I can tell you, the spices, black pepper, pioul which we put in our soups, lentils, tomato pasta”.

What seems interesting is that in both cases the same qualities are attributed to these products, nonetheless differentiated.

“When we go in August, we stay for a month, we take everything and come. 60 kg of olive, 50 kg of bulgur. We go by plane and come back by bus because we carry our foods. Everything is natural, from the village, from Antioch. Everything so fresh, fresh... Giurultze, beans, eggplants...Spices as well, black pepper, oregano...we get everything from there. These you know

where and from whom do you get them. For example, fillik [!!!] you know? I get that from the village every year 6-7 kg. Even the rice, its much cheaper. I don't know they might be bringing it from Syria. But we bring everything from the village".

When the idiom of exchange is that of the gift, a common practice that signifies the return of the gift is the offering of labor supply when that is needed. It seems that the gift circuit is thought to be valued more as that besides the actual produce it also yields social relations that reinforce one's connection with homeland.

"We bring all the things from the village . All the food. All the bulgur from the village, the ladies take it, my mother in law used to make it for us but not now- because she got ill, ...they boil it. Then they dry it and later take it to the mill- to have made fine or thick, accordingly, bring it back, we make it flour, our all flour comes from there, the bulgur, the tomato paste, pepper paste, pomegranate juice, all home made".

In this fashion, it makes ethnographic sense the fact that one of my informants saw appropriate to fund his aging mother to hire laborers to work the fields instead of using the same money to buy the products from somebody else. It seems thus more important to preserve fields from decay keeping them productive. Absence in this case is substituted by the proxy presence of money.

"Many go to the village during the picking season. Now, my mother is here, and we give her money and we tell her to hire people to help her. At least not to be alone, but those who own many fields at the village, they go themselves to help their parents and to bring back whatever they need. Let's take my mum and dad who live here go to the village for a month at the time of the olives, they go, they pick them and they also bring olives to us- they be well, I mean because they have their own fields, they have their olives why let the olives fall to the ground and be wasted, they make the olives by hand, the olives oil let's say, you know it's very difficult. They put the olives on a stone and turn the stone around. The olive oil in which we put bread in and Isas now, especially during our fast it's very good".

On the other hand for those that do not possess land, as not everyone has property back in the village buying remains the only option.

"Our village it's a rich place but one must have fields if you don't can't do anything- to go and work alone- impassible, so we moved here. We bring some goods from there, every year we go, we get them and come back. Like bulgur, the olive oil, the olives, peppers, black olives, green olives, everything from there.

What I suggest here is the distinction between a gift economy (Mauss , Godelier) and the market economy. In the case of Tokacli village these systems of exchange reinforce bonds with the homeland (village), however the gift economy cement the existence of a family and kinship network extending it in time.

“They are fresher because are made by our grandfathers, grandmothers. My mother for example, she makes everything there and she gives them to us. The women in the village make the tomato-paste and the pepper paste. Why should you get it from here.. you don’t know what’s in it? They are your own people, they want to gain a bit and you benefit by being fresh”.

In this way people keep a door open, there is always a reason to visit and a place to return in future years. In the second case of informal market economy, there are some characteristics similar to official economy. The products become commodities and what is underlined is the fact that they are ‘cheaper’ and ‘fresher’. The element of affect is reduced. So there is value attributed to the products and not the production process. *“And the spices, everything we didn’t get used to the things from here, everything from there. It’s a matter of habit. They are also much cheaper and you know more fresh and healthier.”*

The process of modification, transformation, creates a more complex relation. In the case that the products are processed in the city their arrival- transfer in the city is not the last act of the circulation. Furthermore there is the case where the gift continues being a gift in the city since it changes hands since it is given to others to consume it.

In this section, we are introduced to a parallel story. It is instances of village life that the interlocutors reinforce in their everyday performances in Istanbul. The space organization in the village adds another layer on the already existing ones within the holdings. Besides the material, symbolic and affected divisions and hierarchies, the space is subjected to pre-occupied notions of space.

In the village where most of the professions revolve around agriculture and cattle-breeding, most of the labor is part of an open air continuous activity. Part of the products produced is kept for personal use to support livelihood while others are exchanged or sold in the local market. Some parts are brought into the holdings whereas others are processed or manufactured in the holdings, back in Istanbul. In this process, different people and patterns of distribution and circulation are involved. As it happens in the vil-

lage, most of the dairy products, vegetables, meat and spices are used to support livelihood in the city as extra support. What is implicit in these repetitive actions is that their income as gatekeepers is not sufficient. In a different respect, however, they signify an organic connection to the village which reinforces kinship relationships and an informal market.

The different cuisine becomes an identity marker, and the products are vested with symbolic meaning. They are natural, pure, and healthy. In another perspective, they are values attributed to the interlocutors' performances and belonging to their group. This, however, is not new. Food preferences and practices have been instrumentalized in a state level; creating social categorizations and groupings amongst populations. It is the national or regional discourses about food that I am referring to here. In this case, the attitude of the interlocutors meets the official Turkish discourse about the local Antiochean cuisine which is delicious, multicolored, and spicy. These are characteristics that give birth to conceptualizations about a region which is considered multicultural and pluralistic. As a corollary to this, what is constructed as a narrative, and exported as a product to satisfy politics of commerce, tourism and marketing, is internalized by the people.

Another interesting element that unfolds with the narratives is the feeling of control. The Antiocheans highlight the fact that they have the control of the products. In any instance of the production circle, they acknowledge the processes that are involved. This is contrasted to the life in the big city where they cannot hold control of what is going on. All the above come together with the element of trust. What I refer to as trust, is all the contracts people make with one another in order to make it possible for the network of distribution to operate amongst the people and by the side of formal economy and markets. These contracts are based in mutually shared values of loyalty, conceptions of kinship and a broader sense of survival and maintenance of the group.

2.5 Summing-up analysis:

In this chapter we see that the “in between” Antiochean houses, entail 'in between' open air spaces, the yards of the holdings.

These are small green enclaves, interrupting the domination of cement in the city of Istanbul, a commonly accepted privilege. What becomes evident is a change in the dynamics of space and encounters, compared to the previous chapter. The garden – as a new, clean breath of oxygen - overpasses the claustrophobic emotions evoked by the old and heavy constructions of the holdings.

In a big extent silences for a while, like an illusion, the affect of the buildings. The second shift that we observe, is the one that comes with the perception of preservation, now conceptualized as beautification. In the term 'beautification', I include all the everyday practices of cleaning and tidying that people do within the area they consider as home, in order to feel nice and comfortable. This is not connected necessarily to the possession of expensive objects, but rather to values of ordering and acknowledgment of what a household already possesses, in a way that the existing objects and places create meaningfulness to the inhabitants.

The Antiocheans intervene to the gardens with loose temporal constructions, which do not cost, in capital and labor terms; unlike house interiors, where construction as an intervention means something more permanent in a building that does not belong to them. Thus, what is produced usually in the garden costs less and is consumed promptly. Of course, there is always an investment: hens, wood and agricultural tools; fences that can be easily dismantled, strings for laundry, etc. However, there is no grand narration on the matter, rather everyday practices and seemingly unimportant details. Nothing durable in time, in a sense. The potentiality concerns only the present time and place. It seems coincidental, but also belongs to them in a way that does not need negotiation, and that is what makes the gardens a privilege. There is no reason to prove that the space is theirs. By using the gardens, they show a living; the gardens mark the place they inhabit.

The Antiocheans have to get tuned in with the weather conditions in the process of consuming and appropriating the gardens. In a repetitive mode, the plants are irrigated, trained, vegetables are planted, the floors are brushed and wiped. This behavior is also

encouraged by the Rums, who seem to conceptualize these spaces as empty, of no specific interest and historical equivalence.

All of the above reveal a self - absorption in what the gardens encapsulate.

Big sacks with goods, make their way from the door of the garden, to the patios and then they are open to redistribution in smaller containers; indicating that there is life taking place within the holdings.

The objects introduced in this chapter do not carry the heavy load of the 'muzealized' objects in the first chapter. Usually these are objects which are old, of little or no value to the community, and the Antiocheans can use for their own everyday activities, and these in a sense become part of their house (such as pots, some furniture, metal – ware are being reused). Furthermore, we find objects that belong to the Antiocheans, which are usually new, many of which are obtained from their homeland, some are given to them as gifts, but many are bought by themselves in Istanbul (such as mats and pallets used in cooking or for drying food in the sun, big plastic containers to store the products bring from home, carpets and trousseau).

In a second level, the unlocking of the doors brings in visitors who are guided around, served coffee. Questions are answered, explanations are given when necessary. And this is the moment when the relaxing atmosphere is disrupted and becomes a burden. There is a hegemonic feeling of gaze. It is in the garden that they are openly exposed to other peoples' eyes and their behaviors subjected to remarks, warrants and even to acts of humiliation. The Antiocheans seem to balance this out with the visits of their friends and relatives.

Lastly, we see that the interviewees put a lot of emphasis on food. As revealed by the narratives, it is food that is appaeled with meaning, contrary to the objects. And this leads to a focused discussion around the perceptions of what is temporal and what is permanent. Anything from an activity to a product or object, that is included, used or shaped, in the everyday activities of the Antiocheans is of temporal consumption, and can be easily dismantled. This is a different level of negotiation, since what is really compared and contrasted is the long existing presence of concrete buildings, valuable objects and historical presence of one group, with the handmade wooden or tin constructions, the daily tools and dairy products and recent arrival of the other group. This

could imply that the Antiocheans are here only for a while and their presence can be questioned at any time.

Another important element is the spirituality unveiled through their interaction with nature and animals.

The black snake, mentioned in one of the case-studies, is perceived as a spiritual positive-force, protecting the people and the holdings. The act of killing it puts an end to the protection. What happens when the snake is no longer there? This correlates with the example of the icon in the first chapter, which protected the church from being violated but shows no signs of its powers any more. What happens when the icon silences?

These two aforementioned aspects, of food and spirituality, tie up coherently with all the moments that signs and sights of abandonment, ruination and affect are manifested. In all instances when the surrounding environment, present material conditions of constructions and objects serve as markers and scars, echoing explicitly the shrinking of a group. In all manifested, but also unconscious claustrophobic feelings, experienced by the Antiocheans. For instance, in the case of the cemetery, or the garden whose walls are falling apart and intruders are harassing the yard, or in those cases where it is evident that although there is no apparent reason, the inhabitants remain within the walls of the holdings.

No matter how beautiful or relaxed the experience within the gardens can be, it always comes with a reminder of what has happened to the people who used to inhabit them before. This raises questions of what the future of a minority or marginalized group can bring and how official state policies, strategies and decisions can affect, suddenly and unexpectedly, the future imagined within the holdings, or within each family's home.

However, the Antiocheans seem to bypass these uncertainties and fears, because life goes on and it is in the repetition of what is perceived as temporal that permanence occurs.

SOCIALITIES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I move along the menial everyday activities through which the Antiocheans appropriate the spaces they inhabit in Istanbul and intend to focus to events in their lives that have a ceremonial character, are in a sense ‘exceptional’ and quite formal. These events might be life cycle rituals related to their religious identity such as baptisms, weddings and funerals; or other religious rituals that are part of yearly celebrations (e.g. Easter or Mary’s assumption); or might even be non religious ‘exceptional’ moments related mainly to their children education. The point here is that these events are at the same time sites for Antiocheans to further enhance the appropriation I have talked before, this time in a setting which is much more formal and limited.

Thus I start my analysis from those events that take part in the very same estates I have discussed until now, the same churches, schools and gardens that this time are used in their original functional role but to serve the purposes of the Antiochean inhabitants. As one would expect these are also or rather first and foremost sites where once again the Antiocheans encounter the Rums of Istanbul, but this time each one of them has shifted role. This, together with the formal context rearranges the underlying relationship creating new space for negotiation.

However, as these rituals (especially those of the life cycle) are central to the social reproduction of what is thought of as ‘us’, with a reference to the homeland, they move away from the close context of Istanbul domestic and public space and enter into the social setting of Tokacli as a real place where Antiocheans meet, bargain, reproduce,

chart their present and future lives without the presence of the Istanbul Rums but on and through their geographically extended kinship networks. On the latter seems to lay an idea of a 'diasporic' "we", which oscillates between a social (kinship) and a geographic (Tokacli) referent.

3.2 Becoming family- becoming visible:

Among the rituals of the Orthodox Christian life cycle, Baptism is the one that signifies the entrance of a new member to the Orthodox Christian church. Furthermore, it creates a new social relation of fictive kinship²², that between the baptized and his/hers godparents. In the case of the Antiocheans in Istanbul, baptism of their children signifies also a moment that they take front stage and encounter the Rum *istanbulites* in a much different fashion than in their everyday lives. Effectively, it becomes a 'key' that opens up a different kind of door.

It is quite important here to point out that many baptisms take place in the very same holdings within the network of the communal houses, in the churches they look after every other day. Most of the people invited to be present are usually members of the extended family and friends of the parents (Antiocheans), but can also be Istanbul Rums, members of the specific Rum community: *"Both of our boys were baptized here in the church of Saint George. This was almost 30 years ago and ever since nobody else was baptized in the church... I was very privileged to get both my kids baptized in this church, it is a blessing and it is right next to our house"*.

One of the most important decisions to take beforehand is who the godparent would be. This can happen either with the parents asking somebody or if someone who might feel close to the family (a friend or a relative) can offer themselves. Many of the Antiocheans seem to seek a Rum of Istanbul for this position.

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The study of fictive kinship has attracted much interest in Anthropology and a review of the relative literature is far beyond the scope of this thesis. However it is important to note the extended critique that has been directed towards such division, between fictive and real kinship (see for e.g. Carsten, 2000, Shneider, 1984). Note that my use of the term here is rather analytical.

“We have been looking for a godparent to our daughter but everyone avoids it, they all have an excuse. Then we asked our patron Mr. M who said that he would happily do it. But then when a young Greek girl showed up and shared such interest we thought that it would be great for our daughter to have a young godmother. She would have the energy to take care of her and she could always visit her in Greece”.

One here is tempted to recall classical ethnographies on patron-client relationships (e.g. Cambell, 1964), where a bond of reciprocity based on the idiom of kinship is created. In the specific case of the Antiocheans this serves also as a possibility of further integration within the Rum Istanbul Rum Community. *“Mr A. has baptized our son H. He has been like a father to us. Has helped us in many ways all these years”*. Thus, the holding official is conceptualized as a father as a protector.²³

However such a choice includes a degree of risk, opening up the intimate space of family to a ‘stranger’ whose intentions and commitment through time cannot be taken for granted. Thus there are cases that the godparent is looked for within the kinship network, as a safer option.

“My son was baptized here in Istanbul. Here we are being baptized by relatives. My brother's son was baptized by my brother in law D. and my sister baptized my daughter H. My son baptized his small cousin and so on. We try to keep our bonds strong. Ok they are her uncle and aunt but when my daughter visits her aunt addresses her as “godmother”. Generally this is what happens”.

What is at stake here is to which extent the family will open the door. The presence of Rums during the ritual is one thing and the life-long obligations stemming out godparenthood is another. On the other there seems to be a value on its own to keep this newly created spiritual bond within the kinship lines, further enhancing the pre-existing relationship.

In either case godparenthood is considered an honor and it creates a lifelong bond of rights and responsibilities, but also it allows entrance to the intimate inner circle of family: *“You are family now”* said my neighbor after I have baptized their daughter together with a Greek friend of my parents in the church by our garden.

²³ A similar well documented example is that of Albanian immigrants in Greece that actively seek to find a godparent to baptize their children as a strategy of integration. See for e.g. Michail, 2008: 347.

“From now on you can always tell me openly what you think and I will freely, as a brother, tell you my thoughts. I might even get angry to you but it will be only because I care and I feel comfortable. That's what families do”

Focusing on the ritual itself, what comes forward is the sharp contrast between the everyday role as gatekeepers of the holdings of the Antiocheans (see ch. 2) and that of the protagonists of the baptism. Against their functional invisibility (as required by the Rums as well) during their daily duties, during the baptism ceremony the Antiocheans (parents) come to the foreground as central figures. For once they are the ‘users’ of the church and at the same time the visitors attend their own life, they become their guests. The point here echoes Herzfeld’s observation (in the context of a Cretan town) that “... hospitality is a multilayered edifice of complex relations” (1991: 83). Antiocheans are not obligated this day to offer hospitality, they control it themselves creating thus an obligation towards whoever attends (Antiocheans and Rums alike). So, they are dressed in their formal clothes and whoever comes as a guest including the officials from the Rum community spell wishes and offer them joyful comments.

The ritual itself is divided in three parts. In the occasion of mine godparenthood, at the beginning people gathered in the entrance of the church where we as godmothers held the baby and quote the prayer of Belief, by blowing against her to 'reject Satan'. It is there that we were asked to name the baby. Then all together we were taken by the priest in the central body of the church where the baby was baptized, meaning that she she was immersed three times in a tub with blessed water. The priest performing the ritual was the same one who works in the church, which meant that he had already an established relationship with the Antiochean family.

Throughout this part parents and guests gathered around creating what would look like a circle of protection, still keeping a safe distance from the space of the actual spiritual process. During this the two grandmothers of the girl, one of them had traveled from Tokacli to be present, stepped out the circle and walked towards the bath and in a synchronized manner and one tempo said a wish in Arabic which ended in a yell. At this point the Rum priest obviously disturbed told them to stop since it wasn't 'appropriate' to 'intervene' in the ritual, showing at the same time to the Antiocheans the limits of their 'freedom'. The comments of the Antiocheans showed their irritation in private. *“He did*

not have to say that, it was a Christian wish” comment an elder aunt of the couple stressing that it was the priest that missed the point.

In the last part we dressed the baptized child in new clothes with the blessings of the priest and we placed a golden cross attached to a necklace around the baby's neck. When the ceremony was over we signed an official document called “baptistiko” (βαπτιστικό), proof that the child had become an Orthodox Christian. As the formal part of the ritual ended, limits among Antiocheans and Rums were drawn anew. In the small party that followed the ritual the elder Antiocheans spoke mainly in Arabic and sung village songs also in arabic while we danced in a big circle. In this intimate circle I was present as the godmother, though not the Rum officials.

A final comment on the baptism is related with certificate issued, the *vaftistiko*. Beside the symbolic (writ religious) connotations of this document one has to stress its legal status as well. Formally this document is required in order an Antiochean to become legally member of the Rum Community. This is quite important in many occasions, a central one being the registration of the Antiochean children to the Rum Schools of Istanbul. (see Ozgul)

However there seems to be an interesting confusion concerning its meaning. In some cases it is juxtaposed with an official document the Antiocheans need to obtain in order to get Greek citizenship and possibly some of the privileges that the Greek state has granted to the Istanbul Rums (including easier access to Greek Universities). Rums of Istanbul have the right to apply for Greek citizenship but the Antiocheans are asked by the Greek state to prove they have Greek origin. There is where the *vaftistiko* comes into play, as for the Antiocheans becoming members of the Orthodox church in Istanbul should make them (at least legal) members of the Rum community and eligible for Greek citizenship:

“In '88, there was an issue, our dad and mom had to be... “how do you call that concerning Greece?” Citizenship? We didn't have that which was necessary to register to the school. So I had to go to a Turkish school, I was done with the turkish school and then when time has come for me to continue in secondary school, that issue was solved. I attended secondary school at the Central, at Pera”.

There is a second complimentary ritual that takes part three days later and this is not public, it is called “the first bath”. I had never heard of this before. As I found out later some people practice it in different versions both in Istanbul and in Greece as well. Most of the Antiocheans practice it. For three days after the baptism the child is not bathed to keep the blessed oil which is applied during baptism on its skin by the godparents. The third day the godparents give the child its first bath as a Christian. It takes place in a small circle of guests and only women are allowed.²⁴

24 In this case the ritual took place in the garden. We placed a rug on the floor and on top of the rug we placed a big plastic bowl with warm water, together with two buckets of water. All the women present made a circle around me sitting on chairs, and I sat on my knees undressing the child. The mother brought the clothes which were used to dress the child with during the baptism together with the towels and the underwear that were all in oil as I had to place them on the bottom of the bowl. I set the child in the bowl on the armful of laundry and bathed her. Then I had to wash the clothes together with regular clothes of the child, while the women around me were teasing me saying that I don't wash them long enough and that I should try harder. In the end I had to throw metal coins in the water making a wish for the child. After that the child was dried and dressed and we were served refreshments. Although the ritual doesn't allow men to be present some close male relatives were present. No Rum attended this ceremony.

3.3 Graduating from the Rum School: Education, Language and Integration - Strategies for overcoming distinction

Until now I have looked at baptism as a site of encounter between Antiocheans and Rums; at the same time as a religious ritual that takes over a civic significance as the sine qua non for Antiocheans to be considered eligible to be members of the Rum Community. (This raises questions of property and belonging, once the Antiocheans become members -recognized having equal rights with the Rums- it means they can participate in the communal elections and rise in decision-making positions concerning the community, or in administrative positions related to the property of the community, its distribution and maintenance) Now I will turn to a civic ritual that signifies another moment in this long process of integration through encounter. I am referring here to the ceremony of graduation of Antiochean children from one of the Rum schools of Istanbul. One cannot overstate the significance of this ceremony for the Antiocheans. In the end of every school year, customary for all Turkish schools, there is a big graduation party and reception held usually in one of the city's central luxurious hotels. In our case, apart from the students and the staff of the school, relatives of the graduates participate as well.

For this there seems to be a whole preparation period and the event marks an important moment of the year that those invited (family members) have to schedule in advance to avoid missing it: *"This year it is my brother's daughter who is graduating. My niece H. Few years ago it was her brother. My brother has invited me and there is no way I won't go. I want to honor her and besides if I don't show up it will make my relatives sad. It will create unbalance in our relations."* New outfits for the occasion are bought, the closest women relatives do the shopping together and for a long period preparation for the occasion is on the top of everyday agenda. Kinship members residing in Istanbul are invited, nephews, cousins, uncles and aunts even the grandparents. Presence is thought in a context of mutual reciprocity:

"In the past fewer people participated but I wanted as an aunt to be there. The previous year I was there as well since I was the aunt of two graduates."

It's a unique feeling a good one. You are close to your nephew or niece that graduates. I was close to my brother. I think of my children, I wouldn't want them to be alone at that moment of their life. It costs money, o.k. But in the future if it is only their father and mother they will be in a difficult position in relation to the rest. I hope that in a similar way this will happen with my children. It would be nice to have their parents together with their relatives close to them. I will have a similar group photograph taken with my children”.

During the party that follows, the parents and guests have the opportunity to engage with the teachers, the Rum officials and the parents of the Rum students in a context quite different than that of everyday life. For Antiocheans it is a day of pride. This time the encounter takes place not in the everyday strategies of defining a home but rather in children's education seen here as a social field. The notion of social field is central to Bourdieu's sociology as it plays the role of the social context with which an individual's habitus (his other basic formulation) is organized and performed (Bourdieu, 1978, 1993). A field according to Bourdieu is a form of social organization with two main aspects: (a) a configuration of social roles, agent positions, and the structures they fit into and (b) the historical process in which those positions are actually taken up, occupied by actors (individual or collective) (Hanks 2005: 73) Education is taken to be one of those fields where position and position taking (student#teacher) are defined by opposition. In this field then schools are the actual sites where this dynamic opposition is played out. Furthermore as Lois Wacquant points out in his forward of Bourdieu's *State of Nobility* “Bourdieu's abiding interest for the schools stems from the role he assigns it as guarantor of the contemporary social order via the state magic that consecrates social divisions by inscribing simultaneously in the objectivity of material distributions and in the subjectivity of cognitive classifications” (xix).

However in our case this needs a certain reformulation. As for many immigrant groups education for Antiocheans is conceived as the main route to upward social mobility. For most of the older generation that grew up in Tokacli this investment in cultural capital represents a second exit from village and village life. Narrations of the past point out that in many cases (and for many reasons) education was not an option:

“If my children were born in the village I wouldn't have done so much for them but seeing the way of life here I would be lying if I tell you that there aren't more options. Here they are lucky concerning their access to

technology, schools and other similar things. They've got more opportunities and rights and in case we would return to the village they'll have a difficult time. It won't be for me since I am familiar with the life there. I was born there. I was a daughter of a middle class family with ten kids. My parents were farmers we had gardens and cattle. It was a lot of hard work but it was quiet and beautiful. But I wasn't lucky with education. I attended the first grade in Tokacli but the following year no teacher came so I had to go to Altinozu. I then returned to the village to complete the fourth and the fifth grade. After primary school I started to work with my parents. So I want now to provide this opportunity to my children. I don't want them to say "mother because of you this and this happened." So let me raise them study them and hope for their good luck". Or as another informant put it bluntly: "we are Christians and Greek Orthodox Christian schools are the most appropriate for us. We came from Antioch for the future of our children".

Being out of school in the village was not only due to the hardships of life in a rural village. Political turmoil²⁵, Turkish state's educational politics, out-migration and a shrinking school population have contributed to inhibit a completion of educational curriculum:

"I was born and grew up in the village. I began to work when I was twelve. I didn't like studying that much but I wanted to study to create more opportunities for myself but the reason why I didn't study is the pressure that was used against the Christian population, meaning that we were not taught to love school because we were Christians. In Turkey, minorities are not welcomed by the majority of the population. If there are seventy-five million let's say the seventy-four do not like Christians. They don't want them. I wasn't able to study because the Turkish teachers and students crashed us. There was no Rum school in the village".

This last quote implies the beginning of an answer to why should it be a Rum school in Istanbul. What I argue here is that choosing a Rum school is not simply out of necessity (education at any cost) but a conscious choice with many repercussions:

"It had to be a Rum School to be safe and since there are such schools it's not sensible at all for someone to send them to a Turkish one. I am happy with Zappeio at Taxim where my daughter J. goes. My children learn Greek and next year English. And

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The borderland position of Tokacli (20 kilometers from the Syrian border) was a constant source of political instability in the area.

the most important thing is that we are in peace. They are schools we can trust". Peace might just mean that they are comfortable when their kids are away in the Greek school but could also be raising the question of structural violence.

And despite the fact that Antiocheans are aware that the Rum school is a site where the encounter with Rums is far from idyllic, full of hierarchies and discrimination, they posit their presence there as their moral right as Orthodox Christians:

"We send our daughter O. to the Rum School. We are happy that the environment is christian like us. They speak Greek and they are like brothers. But some people don't understand that they are trying to use it for other purpose. They see us as second class citizens but that doesn't suit us. Our God, our Creator has made us all the same. Who are we to say that one person is 'high' and the other 'low'. ...Some feel superior; they have the money that's why they talk like that. What does money mean? If you think like that God someday might make you wonder for the things that will occur. Just think that most people from my village here live in churches like "neokoros", we work in the cemeteries, we offer services. Therefore they consider us second class citizens. Some of our people sometimes act like that as well once they earn money. We shouldn't forget where we come from. If someone does so he loses his dignity".

What we witness here is an interesting reversal of roles. I have commented extensively before (ch. 2 and 3) on the role of the Antiocheans as the gatekeepers of the buildings they reside. However, as they enter the Rum schools they face the Rums as the gatekeepers of their integration into the community. Unavoidably this is a source of distinction with several referents class, ethnicity, origin:

"Let me say something. Here the Greeks are not united. That's true. When say to talk to us they say you are not 'Rum', you are Arab. But why do I stay in that church, the Greek Church, why did I got baptized in that church? I don't know 'why'." or as another one put it *"they make distinctions, and how are we supposed to live together. To explain it is easy but in practice is difficult. They look at you scornfully they see you as second class saying 'they are Arabs' but they don't know they should go to the village. They think that we are here because we are hungry, we have no money and we don't own anything. We did come, we settled here, God may keep them well, but we serve the churches, we serve God."*

The response of the Antiocheans to what they conceive as a constant distinction on the side of the Istanbul Rums is to engage to this game of othering by attempting on the one hand to rearrange the content of the categories that make them outsiders to the

Rum community and on the other by pointing at why the Rums can not be without them. To begin with they use the term Rum as the Ottoman millet category, that is based singly on religion. In addition, they consciously underplay the importance of language as an index of differentiation:

“The Antiochean Rum are different only in one thing, that they speak Arabic. Our language is Arabic because our villages belonged to Syria and later became part of Turkey. Now, maybe they new Greek before, we don't know when Alexander the Great went there what language they spoke. After that whoever took the place the people spoke his language. In a similar way now that we are here we speak Greek, if go to France we will speak French, as it happens with many of our people that live abroad...[our children] today they don't know Arabic, their parents don't know Greek, inevitably to converse with them, they speak Turkish, when you are in Turkey of course you would speak Turkish, if we were in Greece we would speak Greek.”

In this quote language becomes less an 'authentic' index of who 'we' are and more a contextual detail. Rhetoric as it may be, it makes clear that a counter-hegemonic discourse, with its own categories (religion replacing language) and its own alternative genealogies (Hellenistic middle east) is being created.

Additionally, the demographic waning of the Istanbul room community is a fact that the Antiocheans are well aware of:

“The Greeks here see us, as second class people, that's true. We have filled all the Greek schools. If we weren't here, there would have been no Greek school. They would have been closed up. Now, if you go to schools you'll see fifteen Rum and sixty of us. And then they say 'you are not Christian like us. 'Once I heard a woman say 'all you Arabs, you have taken over our schools. Then 'why did you let us, accepted us?', I said. The Greek Orthodox Christians from Istanbul feel superior. That's a mistake. We are all the same”.

In both these cases the strength of what I called counter-hegemonic narrative may be overplayed. Arabic is only spoken within the intimate space of kinship meetings and then mainly by elders that grew up in Tokacli.

“My mother had to get used to the language. She didn't know Turkish back in the village. They just spoke Arabic. Besides she did not go to school she is not educated, she is illiterate and so is my father. Whatever he learned in Turkish, perhaps a bit to read and write, he learned it in the army. He was taken from school and sent to work in the village when he was in the third class. In the village there is only Turkish school unfortunately there is no Greek school. So whoever goes to school he/she must attend the Turkish

school”.

Its public performance is avoided in the presence of Istanbul Rums to avoid scornful looks and outright verbal rebukes. The continuity of the language among the younger generation is (consciously) broken creating disruptions within the family:

“I talk to my mum in Turkish. Sometimes she talks to me in Arabic but I answer in Turkish. I understand Arabic but I cannot speak it. My mother didn't speak it well either, but after she got married she started speaking more and more because she had to talk to her mother in law, my grandmother. My grandmother doesn't know Turkish well.”

or as another informant put it

“Together with my brother we learned Arabic from our parents but we can only speak it. We can't read or write it. Now, here most youngsters can't speak it. I don't know why. We learned it when we were little kids. My brother does not know Arabic very well but he understands. Most children speak only Turkish and also know some Greek.” E. carried on saying that things had not always been easy”.

In certain cases the actual use of Arabic but also its memory is stripped of any direct reference to the relationship to the Rums and becomes naturalized as a product of an individual's life course.

When asked, G seemed to be fond of Arabic.

“My father knew all the prayers and the Hymns, he also knows them in Arabic. When he enters the church he prays in Arabic. I don't know but it's beautiful. I'll learn it. In the past we had a priest in the family. My grandfather even today prays in Arabic. He is my father's father. My mom's father passed away. In the village nearby Altinozu they go to church to learn the prayer and sing in Arabic. However only the children pray. You don't see elder ones, only children”.

Eventually for some the language itself loses any special status and becomes one among many, an asset nonetheless but one to help different kind of difficulties in a constantly changing world:

“I speak Arabic at home with my children. Honestly I have taught them all. “one language one man”. For example R, speaks Arabic, English, Turkish, Greek and Spanish, five languages. My daughter speaks Arabic, English, Turkish, Greek and German. It's very good, now she is studying in Germany and she is doing great. Our son in law studied in Germany and at the moment he is working in a bank and he's better than the Germans. My

daughter's name is Arabic and it means rose scent, flower scent, you probably have heard about it".

In a different historical context (mid 70's), a similar narrative coming from another informant but with reference to learning Greek, proves that the question is not which language but who do you face at each particular time:

"I attended the Maraslio school here in Istanbul that's where I began. My sister also wanted to go to Maraslio. A year after she had registered a paper from Ankara came ...those who were born in Antioch were not allowed to study in the Greek Orthodox Christian schools..."²⁶ And this happened when she was six or seven, let's say in 76-77. We had also cousins who were studying in the Greek Schools...at Taxiarchi-primary school and later they came to Maraslio and with that paper they were forced to stop studying at the Greek schools. When my turn came my father said that I should try my luck and I was accepted, it was luck. Then my brother and sister started going with me. My sister who was not accepted to the Greek school went to a Turkish school but knows Greek very well. She learned it from us. My mother had send her to a seamstress to learn the vocation of sewing and there she picked it up. Also when we were studying at home my brothers when they were studying they recited poems read texts and so on she would hold the book and watch that we would say it correctly knowing that she did not understand but she could tell where we had made a mistake. She would ask us to repeat it and that's how she learned. She does not know how to read or write but she speaks Greek very well. She learned it from us."

In the almost poetic persistence shown by the woman of this narrative one gets a glimpse on a female perspective that in a silent mode, through persistence and ingenuity manages to overcome structural adversary. Then, again in the narrative it is family that makes it possible.

Yet another way of overcoming distinction for the Antiocheans is the conception of the Rum community in broader historical and social terms. Thus one of my interlocutors refer to the example of Imbriots (people from the island of Imbros-), who in the past have experienced similar discrimination from Istanbul Rums. By doing so Anti-

²⁶Probably the reference here was to two directives from the board of education of the Istanbul Prefecture that did not allow the registration to minority schools (510/27, 1974) or movement from one school to another (133127, 1974) without the prior knowledge of the board. This is indicative of the level of control exercised from state's apparatuses towards minority education which inevitably affected all students attending. Copies of both documents can be found in the Appendix. For information on the regime concerning the Minority Schools in Turkey look in the informed three volume report by Nurcan Kaya.

ocheans seem to understand the Rum community as itself being historically defined, questioning its homogeneity in regard with an official discourse that speaks about 'the real Rums' as the ones who have always been in Istanbul. This is similar to the example of Karamanlides (see ch. 2) almost 80 years ago. Then, by fragmenting the image of the 'Istanbul Rums', discrimination becomes a question of personal choice and belief, not a collective stance:

“Not all the Rums behave like that. Some are reasonable and kind especially the elder whoever there are many who treat us like they did with the Imbriots you know. They called them the “gypsies of the Rums” and now they have the same picture for us. They say that we are all Arabs”.

Unlike the elite schools of the French democracy, the schools of the Istanbul Rums were subjected to the politics of nation building on the part of the Turkish state, which attempted to control and marginalize them as minority schools. At the same time these institutions were assigned with the role to reproduce the social order within the Istanbul Rum community. The entry in the schools of the Antiochean orthodox Christians has put this social order in question. The reason for this is that this population's both economic and cultural capital was relatively low in comparison with the Istanbul Rum's however they occupied the same educational environment. In this sense the hegemonic discourse of the Rum's had to be renovated and at the same time face the counter-hegemonic (thought mostly silenced) discourse of the new-comers. However, from the view point of action any field is a space of “strategic possibilities” in which actors have potential moves and courses of action (Bourdieu 1993, p. 314). Thus the Antiocheans seem to see in participating in this unfavorable school environment as an opportunity for gaining cultural capital that then could transformed into economic one.

Within this context the question of language use and competence becomes quite central. It is argued that from a language perspective habitus corresponds to the social formation of speakers, including the disposition to use language in certain ways, to evaluate it according to socially instilled values, to embody expression in gesture, posture, and speech production (Arno 2003, Farnell 2000, Hanks 2005). However, in the case of the Antiocheans this is further complicated taking into consideration that they shift between three different languages. Being in schools that academic excellence is based on mastering of Greek, living in a larger social context that requires them to speak Turkish

and coming for a family and kin environment that use to a certain extent Arabic. If then, from a practice perspective, speaking and discourse production are ways of taking up positions in social fields, and speakers have trajectories over the course of which they pursue various values (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 345–46), the Antiocheans in order to come to terms with the imposed cultural hegemony of the Istanbul Rums and fulfill the aspirations for upward mobility need to hierarchically organize their use of the different languages. Specially about the Arabic, a language that is doubly stigmatized as ‘other’ in relevance both to Greek and Turkish, what remains is the creation of a realm of intimacy constituted by kin and family that signifies a muted sense of belonging. On the other hand within the schools language becomes the privileged field for the Istanbul Rums to try to re-establish a sense of cultural distinction. Comments about a constant depreciation of schools level due to the presence of the Antiochean students and their low comprehension of Greek help to naturalize a sense of difference and reproduce the ailing cultural capital of an ever-shrinking minority.

3.4 Other rituals

Rituals as sites that enhance encounters are not only performed in the vicinity of the communal houses. As the life of the Antiocheans is inextricably linked with their homeland the geography of rituals extends to Tokacli as well.

In what follows I will give an account of the most important communal ritual in Tokacli that takes place during the celebration of Mary’s Assumption, the 15th of August.²⁷ I arrived to the village just few hours before the starting of the ritual. The village was buzzing. We were seven people in the house and had to get in a row to bath and wear our formal clothes. I was told that I had to pay attention to my clothes and I was asked if I have a new proper dress to wear, since everyone would be under the gaze of everyone else. Furthermore my hosts explained that we have to walk all together, to present the image of one family, that has come together once again. The point here is

²⁷ In Orthodox Christianity this is one of the most important annual celebration and the most important among those that honor the Mother of Christ. For a detailed ethnographic account see J. Dubisch *In a Different Place* (1995)

that at that moment family membership was the most important identity, publicly displayed and performed.

We stepped to the street altogether (as a family) and we covered on foot the distance to the holy space in double time since every few steps our walk was interrupted by interjections, hugs kisses and greetings and concisely the news of the year that had past, in broken Arabic , Turkish, Greek interrupted by German, French, Norwegian. This few hundred meters serve as the time bridge in order to overcome a year of living apart: “*When did you arrive? How are the kids? How long are you staying?*” and an opportunity to introduce me as a semi-outside: “*She is our friend and Andriana's Godmother, she is “yunani”*”. (terminology)

This abundance of communality is contrasted to the empty buildings in their Istanbul homes. This is the only occasion during the year that one would find the holdings in Istanbul closed. For how long is related to the different agreement that each Antiochean family has made with the Rum Community. The importance of the feast has taken also a local flavor. There is a narrative widely held that Holy Mary had visited the village and the people built a shrine, right outside the village, to honor her. Then the celebration of Annunciation becomes the moment that through faith the idea and the practice of one community is performed.

“I visit the village every summer for at least ten days. I have also my brothers/sisters , my father goes more often, now he is there. We have renovated the old house, you know its stone made, it's the old style 35 years ago when my parents got married my father made that house so that they may live in there. But then they moved out the house remained there. We've got a big yard, we get there, we drink our coffee, we read books, and it's so. For some reason both my grandpa and grandma are sick, and dad spends 3, 4, 5 months while my mum less, but we one week, ten days. In the summer, on August 15th when we have the feast and celebrate Panayia's [Holy Mary] day, then everybody goes. All and those who are in Germany they gather on that day, to be together because it's the celebration for the church”.

The site around the shrine, in one of the edges of the village is where all the families with their migrant members present. It is where the grandparents walk around in pride together their children and grandchildren, their daughters and sons in law. It is where friends and cousins meet and where the linguistic Babel is dismantled in the Arabic timbre. As Tokacli gathers, with its members coming from all the diasporic commu-

nities to meet each other once again, the fertile ground for social reproduction is hence provided. Homeland and spirituality allow future spouses to meet despite the fact that they might be living thousands of kilometers apart in the rest of the year. It is a rendezvous that creates a vicious circle of new mobilities back and forth to the village by reinforcing kinship networks and relations. The “we” becomes clearer then than in any other moment and during this process whatever doesn't fit well seems to be forgotten or put aside.

The shrine itself is an open air sheltered square construction, supported by four columns (one in every corner) and in the center there are four icons- one facing each side. There is a short wall surrounding it, creating the feeling of a room with two openings creating a passage in each case towards the column. The structure of the shrine functions to regulate the move of people through it. People enter the shrine using the opening of the structure, turn left to light a candle and then move to the first column to take a clockwise or anti-clockwise circular route around it with four stops, one on each icon. They make the sign of the cross with their fingers, kneel, kiss the icon and move to the next one before they get out from the other opening.

During my presence in the celebration, religious service was run by three priests, the local, an Antiochean priest from the orthodox church of Austria and a priest from the village who grew up and works in Istanbul. It was also run in three languages, Arabic, Turkish and Greek.

It comes as no surprise then that at such a convenient time for social reproduction and place a number of wedding rituals are performed. The presence of a large number of kinship members makes it possible for them to participate in the preparations and make it an issue of the extended family. It seems that everyone from a network of kin helps with the arrangements; especially the last three days and during the wedding day and there is a role for everyone to perform. They help with food dishes for the guests that visit the house to wish to the couple, they serve refreshments and they are part of an invitation party that rounds the village together with some musicians, dancing in rhythm and visit one house after the other in order to ask the inhabitants to the wedding:

“I visit the village once in four years. Last summer I was there, in August

but my parents visit for frequently. We've got a home there, my grandpa is there and we go to him. It's nice there are weddings and baptisms and of course nobody expects an invitation, everybody joins in".

Despite the communal narrative however preparations start in Istanbul. Relatives would do the cloth shopping together, give their opinion on decorations and invitation cards, and help with arranging the music- bringing sometimes musicians from Antioch that would play music in Arabic. Arrangements are made for bringing the elders from the village to the city in order to participate. Apart from involving the extended family in all preparation the wedding as a question to whom one can and should marry is an issue of politics and strategies.

What seems important to the Antiocheans is the limited number of marriages with the Rum Orthodox of Istanbul. Living in an environment with a major Muslim population they are concerned that their children might marry to a non-Christian. Marrying with members of the Istanbul Rum community would give a solution that would also enhance further integration in Istanbul. However this is not happening. For many this is expected, as the rules of distinction based on class and origin make the Antiocheans an unwelcome marital choice for the Istanbul Rum:

"Some marriages with non Christians are possible but problems occur when a child is born, will they baptize him/her or not. The wife will say no, "I'm a Muslim, how am I to baptize my child"! "I'll have the "sunnet" for my child". Here they are not getting married to our people but in Greece they do. Besides there aren't any Rum girls to get married. How many are there? They don't marry our village girls, they consider them Arabs. Also they consider themselves rich. But they do marry to Turks. They make distinctions. To explain it is easy but in practice it is difficult. They neglect us. There is a distinction between first and second class citizens-something like that, they see you as second class saying they are Arabs. But they don't know, they should go to the village. They think that we're here because we're hungry, we have no money, we don't own anything, that's why we have come here. O.k. , we did come, we settled here, God may keep them well, but we serve the churches, we serve God! We don't like them either! They don't like us, we don't like them! That's how it happens sometimes. The one who does not like me, I don't like him either".

There seems to be a norm of what is accepted and what is not. The Antiocheans find a way to overcome it and they do it by marrying other Christians who are around in the city and that is mainly Armenians.

“Some mixed marriages take place in Istanbul. For example my brother is married to a Turkish lady and my sister to an Armenian. I must tell you about ours. Turks, Armenian, Greeks – only one of our village had married to a Greek Orthodox girl. I believe they should marry Greek Orthodox rather than Turks. But there aren't many weddings between the Rums of Istanbul and the Antiocheans. Perhaps the young people of today might.”

Marrying a Muslim is a problematic choice. In some cases who ever does so is kept outside the family, isolated. It affects kinship relations, and sometimes he/she is neglected by the rest of the family and the bonds are slowly cut down. Religion in this context is the common denominator that one has to respect. Thus religion and kinship are inextricably bound.

“When my sister got married to the Turk I was very harsh on her because our faith is very important to me. It took me some time to get used to it and then since she was my sister I decided that her happiness is more important to me and I accepted them both in my house even before the marriage. But there was one condition that she wouldn't change her faith. After the marriage we got some indications that she converted to Islam and became Ottoman, if this is true I will never forgive her, my parents won't stand it, how will I tell them?”.

Religion however is not the only criteria of choice. When the context shifts to the locality of Tokacli where religion is not an issue, the not-so-favorite “other” becomes the inhabitant of the neighboring village (with a Christian population):

*“My uncle married to a girl from there. It is a village towards Oztunuz , a bit further actually. They speak the language differently. We speak Arabic more proper. Even their food is a bit different. You can tell that the taste is not ours. When a girl from there marries to someone from our village they say “oh the bride is from there” meaning she isn't our girl. Our girls don't marry to their young men although their girls marry to our”.*²⁸

However change is occurring. Young Antiocheans are much more than the Rum Orthodox of Istanbul:

“There are mixed weddings but not many they don't get married of course it depends on the individual. Now slowly-slowly things are improving. There

²⁸ There is reference that in this village there is no Muslim population but some people practice Jehovah's Witness. From my participant observation this is a fact for Tokacli village as well. *“There are Jehovah's Witnesses in Tokacli . They don't enter the church and don't celebrate birthdays. My cousin for instance who lives in Germany and practices this religion had her birthday and when I wished her she said that they don't celebrate”.*

are some recent ones. In the past, things weren't like this. But slowly things change. I believe that this happens because we are from Antioch and we are more in numbers, we meet more often”.

This long-term encounter that has been going on for almost thirty years and has created friendships as Istanbul Rum and Antiocheans spend more and more time together in various activities (sports, cultural) and festivities. Still though marriage remains a boundary not easily crossed. Some of the Antiocheans believe that it is a matter of time.

“The younger seem to be getting closer. They spent more time together now while going to the Association of the Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (OIOMKO) and Greek Orthodox Association of Foundations (Rum Vakıflar Dernegi-Rumvader) where they go. My son also went there. They keep company to one another, they call each other when there is an event, a party, we also call the Greek Orthodox youngster of Istanbul- we were a bit fed up with them but we hope something will change in the future, and why not I have a son, why not marry one of the same religion – we will accept them but I don't know if they accept us – What can I say they might, they might – why that – Greek speaking, Arabic speaking –one...There is something special about it I cannot tell you exactly”.

Change then is a question of time and it is obvious that what seems the norm can be imagined to alter through participating more and more into institutions of a single community.

During my fieldwork I have come across one association and that is the “Association of Antiochean People of Istanbul”. It was founded in 2004 and turned out that it refers strictly to Christian Antiocheans and especially to those coming from Orthodox Christian villages in the area of Altinozu. Thus for example no Muslims originating from the same area are included. Its main aim was to bring the Christian Antiochean residing in Istanbul together. It is divided into three sections, one main and two branches that share some autonomy, one for women and one for the youngsters. Although it has been founded almost ten years ago the Antiocheans haven't managed to find a permanent place to host the association and usually the meetings take place in a small hall that is provided to them by a church.

“We would like to rent a bigger space but we're having some financial difficulties. We would have to hire a person as a janitor, to clean, make tea

and that kind of things. We try to gather money from the members there is a donatim for the members, fifty Turkish lira per year, which is nothing for a year, however this isn't enough. For the moment we usually gather by the church of Mouchliotissa which is closed, the rent is cheaper and also has a garden". Women gather under different occasions but their main concern is to talk about problems concerning their youth. "The women branch brings our women together. We meet to have tea and talk about our problems, about issues concerning our youth and to find solutions to those problems. The place we have at the moment has two rooms but when we do something bigger we meet in a big hall. In special celebrations where food is part of it and there is no way to cook it here we reserve a restaurant".

Not everyone participates and there are ambiguous narratives about the aims and intentions of the association.

"I don't go with them. Because we go, give our money and where do that money go? I am not saying that someone in specific takes it. Ok some of it is used for nice things. They organize a boat trip for women on women's day, some parties. They bring the youngsters together. Sometimes we go out altogether to have a drink; however when there is a meeting nobody shows up. They send us messages about the meetings and then nobody shows up".

What comes out from this narration is the feeling of mistrust. It raises questions of control, organizational tactics but also questions regarding the content of such actions.

Another interviewee who has migrated recently to Istanbul and comes from Altinozu seems to have a different conception underlining a different kind of distinction.

"I'm not from Tokacli. We are not registered to the Association. Nobody ever searched for us. We've been here for three years but nobody has visited us. That's why we don't pay our share there. We would like to, perhaps in the future. Since I don't belong to it I cannot give you any information".

One other function of the association is to reinforce the existing collective attitude of support in cases of illness and sorrow.

"If somebody is sick or if someone dies all villagers go there to help the family and that makes me feel proud for that kind of relationship among the villagers. Last time a man died we all got together at Baloukli²⁹ at least those of us who had heard about it to comfort and encourage the relatives. Also to help them get to the village because we don't bury our died here we bury them back at the village".

²⁹ Baloukli refers to one of the greatest Rum Foundations in Istanbul that today under its administration runs a hospital and a retirement home. Many of the Antiochean family members as well as many Rums go there for treatment.

People usually collect money and give it to the family that has to bury a beloved one and that money usually covers the expenses to take the deceased to the village. One can notice that there is a common practice to bury their dead to the village. This is due to the fact that it is their homeland after all, and all wish to return one day. Furthermore there seems to be a blurred situation about whether they can or cannot make their funerals in Istanbul but there is confusion whether there is an official restriction or if this is a custom.

“If they didn’t say anything here we would bury them here but generally we prefer to take them back to the village. When my father in law died, we hired a private bus and took him to the village. In previous years the families from Germany and abroad would bring their dead to the village, however it isn’t that often any more. For us however here in Istanbul we take them back to the village. When one gets sick everybody visits them to the hospital from day one. I had a similar experience when my husband had a heart surgery, may he be well, and everybody from the first day until the last visited us. My sister in law would welcome them at the garden. People come to you, spend some time with you, to help you forget and keep you company. In the case of a funeral in the village, when people return to Istanbul they visit you to pay their condolences at home.”

Furthermore what takes place besides the gathering on special occasions, like Easter or Christmas is that the association helps materially the village which in return supports the goals of the association.

“On the 14th of August, the women of the association prepared food and served it for free to the people in the village. The previous year however we went to the village and collected money to restore the church of our village because it was in an awful state. We collected some money in order to help. People from abroad contributed as well because at the end of the day they all consider the church, at least during summer when they visit Tokacli”.

On the other hand the association runs two Bazaar’s, a Christmas and an Easter one, during which apart from other items they sell goods from Antioch that people bring from the village in order to fund their activities. The Christmas Bazaar usually takes place in the reception hall of the Megali Tou Genoys Scholi school in Fener and it is a cooperation among the Antiochean Association and the Association of parents of the students in the school. This collaboration is further supported by the school authorities and the Istanbul Rum community.

3.5 Summing-up analysis

In this chapter we observe a shift in many levels and respects.

There is a clear move from space to socialities, all those encounters the actualization of which create claims and host agencies that go beyond the holdings and the house-making processes.

In a way, the agency of the Antiocheans slips through the agency of the buildings and the hierarchies of space. It escapes the attention of the gaze and in moments overcomes the expressions of distinction. The Antiocheans become the hosts and the gatekeepers of their 'own', by reinforcing their kin networks and putting in the foreground a religious sense of belonging that is ecumenical. However, this implies that there is an extent of realization of strategic counter moves together with politics of religion that together create a tool of negotiation.

The repetitive moves unfold around all those getting-together modes that reinforce the conceptions of a group that is strongly connected, in which the united family image, which overcomes nation borders, stands in the core.

Language and geography become key - features. These moves and actions revolve around shopping together for the ceremonies, organizing impressive celebrations but also supporting Antiocheans which are in need, through their own association.

At the same time, the Antiocheans use to their favor any legal right applying to them to fulfill their dreams about the present and the future, mainly the right to register to the Rum Schools and resolving any convenience that follows the baptism certificate.

All of the above seem to be the result of a bigger process of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic interplays, and these are generated at the point of the actual meeting of the two groups. For every dominant and hegemonic narrative that discriminates the Antiocheans, they respond with their own collective way as to the distinctions of origin, class and language. For every historical claim that raises the question of locality and geography, the Antiocheans have their own counter response. What I would like to highlight here is that, in my understanding, it is the discourse of a Rum bourgeoisie past and the reproduction of this repertoire by the remaining Rums, rather than the existence of one in the present, that creates the distinction.

CONCLUSIONS

This is a story of livelihood and home-making. It is a story of binaries and dualism. It begins with the opening of a door that opens up space for multiple interpretations and possibilities.

Any defined category is reshaped and reconstructed. People become subjects and agents, buildings become heritage and home, objects are used as ornaments but also as enclaves of memory.

The Christian Orthodox Antiocheans meet the Greek Minority of Istanbul and this encounter of tension and belonging brings forward the historical and political issues of minorities in Turkey. This dissertation then, aimed to crystallize a moment in the present.

In this respect the Antiochean people inhabit the ambiguous space of a non-status group. This came as a result of multiple trajectories: power relations within the context of the Turkish Republic, the resultant unclear legal framing for minorities, the urbanization processes within Turkey, the role of Istanbul as a global city. All these trajectories converge in a double migratory experience: that of the Istanbul Rums abandoning the city and that of the Antiochean Christians entering the city. This is the story of the in-between space created, literally and metaphorically out of incidents of violence and dispossession that have affected both groups. Today Antiocheans in Istanbul seem officially and automatically to be considered part of the Greek Minority of Istanbul. Political goals, intentions and expediencies make the group visible and invisible accordingly.

As the story turns to buildings comes yet another dualism and binary on its own. Unfolding space in an organic way follows a path from the outside of the holdings to their inner core in following the *leit-motif* of the official visibility - invisibility interplay.

In other words, the visitor of the story encounters the juxtaposition of the materiality of walls, where walls as markers of boundary-making helps identification and recognition of space within the city landscape, with the ambiguity of what is protected or hidden behind them. At the same time the story unfolds in a parallel but opposing direction, the ontological and affectionate narratives of the people that inhabit the walled spaces. The soul then of the story rests in the inner voices of the interlocutors, who become the gatekeepers during our visits. Thus we understand the microcosm of the holdings as it unfolds from the inner core to the world beyond the walls.

As the story moves on what becomes clear is a sense of a collective pattern from the side of the Antiocheans. They act within this ambiguous setting to fulfill their dreams about the future and sustain a livelihood in a global city. They identify with their religious brothers, the Istanbul Rums and take care of their holdings. However these holdings project their own agency: an affectual burden apparent in the everyday performances of the Antiocheans, triggering memories of traumatic experiences, absences and loss of another group. However, they manage in moments to reverse the nostalgia entailed in this process by transforming these spaces to lively homes. And they do this through beautification of domestic space and socialities.

I consider the end of this story as the baseline for new ones to begin, that would move further and investigate issues on minorities in Istanbul (such as Armenians and Bulgarians), connections with the homeland, creation of spaces of co-habitation in a global city, legal issues of minorities and several others.

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